Apples of Gold

FOR

Young Men and Women:

AND

A CROWN of GLORY

for Old Men and Women:

OR,

The happiness of being good betimes: And the honour of being an Old Disciple.

Clearly and fully discovered, and closely and faithfully applyed.

ALSO

The Young Mans Objections answered, And the Old Mans Doubts resolved,

By *THO. BROOKS*, heretofore Preacher of the Gospel at St. *Margarets* New *Fish-street Hill.*

The Seventeenth Edition.

But I thy Servant fear the Lord from my Youth, 1 King. 18 12.

The hoary head is a Crown of Glory, if it be found in the way of Righteousness, Prov. 16. 31.

LONDON,
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P-r-

TO ALL Young Persons Throughout the NATION, Especially those (of both Sexes) who begin to turn their Faces towards ZION.

Dear Hearts,

A *Word spoken in due season, how good is it! it is often like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver; many times such a word is sweet, precious, pleasing and delectable, and strong in it's operation.*

A company of near friends Dining together one Sabbath-day, one that was at Table (to prevent impertinent discourse) said that it was a question whether they should all go to Heaven or no, which struck them all into a dump, and caused every one to enter into

Prov. 15, 23, 25, 10, 11. A word spoken (*gnalgh-nas*) upon his wheel, that is, with a due coeeurrence and observation of all circumstances of time,

place, person, all which are as the wheels our words and speeches should run: Such a word is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver.

into a serious consideration with themselves; one thought, If any of this company go to Hell, it must be I, and so thought another, and another, and indeed so thought almost every one then present, as well servants that waited as those that sate at the Table, as it was afterwards acknowledged, and (through the mercy and blessing of God) this speech so wrought upon the spirits of most of them, that it proved the first instrumental means of their Conversion.

I have my hopes through grace, that this Treatise, though it be sown in weakness, yet by the blessing of the most High upon it, it may rise in power, and be an instrumental means of the winning of souls to Christ, which is my highest ambition in this World, and therefore I have broke through all difficulties, and carnal reasonings, that might otherwise have stifled this Babe in the Womb, and kept it from ever seeing of the light.

I have read of an Emperor, that delighted in no undertaking so much as those which in the esteem of his Coun-

Counsellors and Captains were deemed most difficult and impossible; if they said such and such an enterprize would never be accomplished, it was Argument enough to him to make the adventure; and he usually prospered, he seldom miscarried.

I have never found greater and choicer blessings to attend any of my poor weak labours, than those that have been brought forth into the World, through the greatest straits and difficulties.

Valerius Maximus *reports, that one telling a Souldier, going to War against the* Persians, *that they would hide the Sun with their Arrows, he answered we shall fight best in the shade; nothing should discourage nor dishearten a Souldier of Christ,* 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4. *Christ saith to all his Souldiers, (as the black Princes Father said to him fighting as it were in blood to the knee, and in great distress)* Either vanquish, or die; *Men of no resolution or of weak resolution, will be but little serviceable to the good of souls; such watch-men as will be free*

Valerius Maximus *lib.* 3. *c. de Fiducia.*

Hist of France p. 196.

from the blood of souls, and be serviceable to the interest of Christ in turning sinners from darkness to light, must be men of spirit and resolution.

Auguſt. de tempore. Serm. 256.

I remember St. Austin beginneth one of his Sermons thus (Ad vos mihi sermo, O juvenes, flos ætatis, periculum mentis) To you is my speech, O young men, the flower of age, the danger of the mind.

So say I, to you, O young men, do I dedicate the ensuing Treatise, and that first because the matter contained therein, doth primarily and eminently concern you.

And secondly, Because of an earnest desire that I have of your internal and eternal welfare.

And thirdly because there is most hope of doing good among you (as I evidence more at large in the following Treatise.)

And fourthly, To countermine the great undermíner of your souls, whose great design is to poyson you, and to possess you in the morning of your days.

Fifthly, To provoke others that are more able and worthy to be more serviceable to you in declaring themselves fully

fully on this very subject; which none yet have done that I know of, though it be a point of as great concernment, to young persons (especially) as any I know in all the Scriptures.

Sixthly and lastly, Because there are very many that lye in wait to deceive, corrupt and poyson your persons with God-dishonouring, Christ-denying, Conscience-wasting, and Soul-damning opinions, principles, and blasphemies.

I have read of one who boasted and gloried in this, that he had spent thirty years in corrupting and poysoning of youth; doubtless many wretches, many Monsters there be amongst us, who make it their business, their glory, their all, to delude and draw young persons to those dangerous errors and blasphemies that lead to destruction. Error and folly (saith one very well) be the knots of Satan, wherewith he ties Children to the stake to be burnt in Hell.

There is a truth in what the Tragedian said long since (Venenum in auro bibitur) poyson is commonly drunk out of a cup of gold; So is an error

Eph. 4. 14. A blind Eye is worse than a lame Foot, he that had the Leprosie in his head, was to be pronounced utterly unclean.

or by notion scorest taken into the judgment and conscience from persons of the fairest carriage, and smoothest conversations. Error is so foul an Hag, that if it should come in its own shape, a man would loath it, and flie from it, as from Hell. If Jezabel had not painted her face, she had not gotten so many young doting Adulterers to have followed her to their own ruine.

Ah! Young men, young men, the blessing of the Lord upon your serious and diligent perusal of this Treatise may be a happy means to preserve you from being ensnared and deluded by these Monsters, who compass Sea and Land to make Proselytes for Hell.

Mat. 23. 15

And thus I have given you the reasons of my dedicating this Treatise to the service of your souls; I would willingly presume, that it will be as kindly taken, as it is cordially tendered; I hope none of you into whose hands it may fall, will say as once Antipater *King of* Macedonia *did, when one presented him with a Book treating of happiness, his answer was* (Oo Scholazo) *I have no leisure. Ah!*

Ah Young Men and Women, young Men and Virgins; as you tender the everlasting welfare of your Souls, as you would escape Hell, and come to Heaven, as you would have an interest in Christ, a pardon in your bosoms, as you would be blessed here, and glorious hereafter, find time, find leisure to read over and over the following Treatise, which is purposely calculated for your eternal good. But before I go further, I think it needful in some respects, to give the World some further account of other reasons or motives, that have prevailed with me to appear once more in Print, which are these.

First, Having preached a Sermon occasionally upon these words (on which this following Discourse is built) I was earnestly importuned to Print the Sermon by some worthy friends; I did as long as in modesty I could, withstand their desires, judging it not worthy of them: but being at last overcome, and setting about the work, the workings and comings in of God were such, as both occasioned

that one Sermon, to multiply into many. Luther tells us, that when he first began to turn his back upon Popery, he intended no more but to withstand Popish Pardons, and selling Indulgences; yet neither would God or his enemies let him alone, till he resolved with Moses, not to leave a hoof of Popery unopposed, &c. God many times in the things of the Gospel carries forth his servants beyound their intentions, beyond their resolution. But,

Secondly, The kind acceptance and good quarter that my other pieces have found in the World, and those signal multiplyed blessings that have followed them, to the winning of many over to Christ, and to the building up of others in Christ, hath encouraged me to present this Treatise to the World, hoping that the Lord hath a blessing in store for this also.

Thirdly, that I might in some measure make up others neglects, whose Age, whose Parts, whose Experiences, whose Graces have long called upon them to do something considerable in this

this way, and that they may be provoked by my weak essay to do better, and to make up what is wanting through my invincible infirmities, and spiritual wants and weaknesses, which are so many, as may well make a sufficient Apology for all the defects and weaknesses that in this Treatise shall appear to a serious judicious eye. But,

Fourthly, The love of Christ and souls hath constrained me to it; as there is an attractive, so there is a compulsive virtue in Divine Love. Love to Christ and souls, will make a man willing to spend and be spent; he that pray's himself to death, that preaches himself to death, that studies himself to death, that sweats himself to death, for the the honour of Christ, and good of Souls, shall be no loser in the end. Divine love is like a Rod of Myrtle, which, as Pliny *reports, makes the Traveller that carries it in his hand, that he shall never be faint or weary. Divine love is very operative (*si non operatur, non est*) if it do not work, it is an argument it is not at all. Divine Love, like fire,*

2 Cor. 4. 14.

2 Cor. 12. 15.

Solus amor nihil difficultatis, Love knows no difficulties.

Senica.

It is said of Marcellus the Roman General, that he could not be quiet, Nec Victor nec victus, neither Conquered nor Conqueror; Such one is Satan.

fire, it is not idle but active; he that loves cannot be barren; Love will make the soul constant, and abundant in well-doing. God admits none to Heaven (saith Justin Martyr) but such as can perswade him by their works, that they love him. The very Heathen hath observed, that God doth not love his children with a weak womanish affection, but with a strong masculine love; and certainly, they that love the Lord strongly, that love him with a masculine love, they cannot but lay out their little all for him, and his glory. But,

Fifthly, I observe, that Satan and his instruments are exceeding busie and emulated in their designs, attempts, and endeavours, in these days, to corrupt, and pervert, to defile and destroy, the young, the tender, the most hopeful and most flourishing plants among us.

Latimer told the Clergy in his time, that if they would not learn diligence and vigilance of the Prophets and Apostles, they should learn it of the Devil, who goes up and down his Dio-

ceses

ceſſ, and acts by an untired power, ſeeking whom he may deſtroy; when the wolves are abroad, the Shepherd ſhould not ſleep, but watch, yea double his watch, remembring that he were better have all the blood of all the men in the world upon him, than the blood of one Soul upon him, by his negligence or otherwiſe.

Satan is a Lyon not a Lamb, a roaring Lyon, not a ſleepy Lyon, not a Lyon ſtanding ſtill, but a Lyon going up and down, as not being contented with the prey, the many millions of Souls he hath got, he ſeeks whom he may ſup up at a draught, as that word (καταπιειν) in the 1 Pet. 5. 8. imports; his greateſt deſign is to fill Hell with Souls, which ſhould awaken every one to be active, and to do all that may be done to prevent his deſign, and help forward the Salvation of Souls.

St. Chryſoſtom compares good Paſtors to Fountains that ever ſend forth waters, or Conduits that are always running, though no pail be put under. But,

Chryſ. in Mat. Ho. 15.

Sixthly,

Sixthly and lastly, I know the whole life of man is but an hour to work in; and the more work any man doth for Christ on Earth, the better pay he shall have when he comes to Heaven. Every man shall at the last reap as he sows. Opportunities of doing service for Christ and Souls are more worth than a World; therefore I was willing to take hold on this, not knowing how soon I may put off this earthly Tabernacle, and remembring that as there is no believing, nor repenting in the Grave, so there is no praying, preaching, writing, nor Printing in the Grave; we had need to be up and doing, to put both hands to it, and to do all we do with all our might, knowing that the night draws on upon us wherein no man can work.

1 Cor. 15. ult.

2 Cor. 9. 6.

2 Pet. 1. 13, 14.

Eccl. 9. 10.

Job. 9. 4

A Christians dying day, is the Lords pay-day, that is a time to receive wages, not to do work. And thus I have given the World a true account of the Reasons that moved me to Print the following Discourse.

There are many things in this Trea-

Treatise that are of use to all, and several things of moment, that are not every day preached nor read. I have made it as pleasurable as time would permit, that so it might be the more profitable to the Reader; and that I might the better take the young man by (a holy) craft, which is a high point of Heavenly wisdom, there being no wisdom to that of winning of Souls. I shall now follow this poor piece with my weak Prayers, that it may be so blest from Heaven, as that it may bring in some, and build up others, and do good to all; And so rest,

Your Friend and Servant in
the Gospel of Christ,

THO. BROOKS.

THE

Your Friend and Servant in
the Gospel of Christ,

THO. BROCK.

THE

The Contents.

THE Explication of the Words, *from* page 1 *to* 10

CHAP. I.

Doct. That it is a very desirable and commendable thing for Young Men, to be (really) good betimes, *this truth proved*, p. 10, 11, 12.

Twelve reasons of this point.

1. *Because he commands it, whose commands are not to be disputed, but obeyed,* *from* 12 *to* 16

2. *Because they have means and opportunities of being good betimes,* *from* 16 *to* 20

3. *Because then they will have fewer sins to answer for, and repent of,* 20, 21

4. *Because time is a precious Talent, that Young Men must be accountable for,* *from* 21 *to* 26

5. *Because*

5. *Because then they will have the greater comfort and joy when they come to be old,* from 26 to 28

6. *Because an eternity of felicity and glory hangs upon those few moments that are allotted to them,* from 28 to 33

7. *Because they do not begin to live till they begin to be really good,* from 33 to 36

8. *Because the Promise of finding God, of enjoying God, is made over to an early seeking of God,* &c. from 36 to 44

9. *Because the time of youth is the choicest and fittest time for service,* from 44 to 47

10 *Because death may suddenly and unexpectedly seize on youth, youth being as fickle as old age,* from 47 to 52.

11. *Because it is ten to one, nay an hundred to one, if ever they are converted, if they be not converted when they are young,* from 52 to 55

12. *Because else they will never attain to the honour of being an Old Disciple,* 55, 56

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The honour of an Old Disciple shewed in seven particulars.

2. *All men will honour an Old Disciple.* from 56 to 58

2. *God usually reveals himself most to Old Disciples, to old Saints,* from 58 to 62

3. *And old Christian, an old Disciple hath got the art of serving God,* 62, 63

4. *An old Disciple, an old Christian, is rich in spiritual experiences,* from 63 to 67

5. *An Old Disciple is firm and fixed in his resolutions,* from 67 to 70

6. *An Old Disciple is prepared for death,* from 70 to 73

7. *An Old Disciple shall have a great reward in Heaven,* from 73 to 79

Use of reproof, from 79 to 84.

CHAP. III.

The several evils that most properly attend Youth, as

1. *Pride,* from 84 to 87

2. *Sensual Pleasures and delights,* from 87 to 93

3. *Rash-*

3. *Rashness*, *from* 93 *to* 96
4. *Mocking and scoffing at Religious men and Religious things*, *from* 96 *to* 98
5. *Wantonness*, *from* 98 *to* 101

CHAP. IV.

Use of Exhortation, to exhort young Persons to be good betimes, and Motives moving thereunto, as,
1. *It is a high honour to be good betimes*, *from* 102 *to* 106
2. *Christ gave himself for sinners, when he was in the Primrose of his age*, *from* 106 *to* 111
3. *It is the best way in the World to be rich in Spiritual Experiences*, *from* 111 *to* 116
4. *The present time is the only time that you are sure of*, *from* 116 *to* 122
5. *It is just with God to reserve the dregs of his wrath for them who reserve the dregs of their days for him*, *from* 122 *to* 125
6. *The sooner you are good on Earth, the greater will be your reward in Heaven*, *from* 125 *to* 134
7. *The*

7. *The Lord is very much affected and taken with your seeking of him, and following after him in the spring and morning of your youth, from* 134 *to* 136

8. *It will prevent many sad and black temptations, from* 136 *to* 140

9. *Consider the worth and excellency of Souls, from* 140 *to* 144

10. *God will at last bring young men to a reckoning, from* 144 *to* 155

CHAP. V.

Quest. *Whether in the great day of account, the Sins of Saints shall be brought into the Judgment of discussion and discovery, or no? the negative proved by divers Arguments, from* 155 *to* 171

CHAP. VI.

Directions to such as would be good betimes, as would know, and love, seek, and serve the Lord in the Primrose of their days; as

1. *Take heed of putting the day of death*

death far off, from 171 to 177
2. *If you would be good betimes, take heed of leaning to your own understanding,* from 177 to 182
3. *If you would be good betimes, take heed of flatterers and flattery,* from 182 to 191
4. *If you would seek the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then take heed of engaged affections to the things of the World,* from 191 to 197
5. *If you will be good betimes, then you must take heed betimes of carnal reason,* &c. from 197 to 201
6. *Take heed of comparing your selves with those that are worse than your selves,* from 201 to 207

CHAP. VII.

Secondly, As those six things must be declined, so several other things must be practised, if you would be good betimes, as
1. *If you would be good betimes, then you must labour to be acquainted with four things betimes,* as
1. You

1. *You must labour to acquaint your selves with the Scriptures betimes, from* 207 *to* 219

2. *You must acquaint your selves with your selves betimes,* 219 *to* 226

3. *If you would be good betimes, then you must acquaint your selves with Jesus Christ betimes, from* 226 *to* 228

Now there are six things which you should be thorowly acquainted with, concerning Jesus Christ. As,

1. *If you would be good betimes, then you must know that there is every thing in Christ, that may encourage you to seek him and serve him,* 228 *to* 230

2. *If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes that Jesus Christ is mighty to save.* 230 *to* 234

3. *Then you must know betimes, that there is a marvellous readiness and willingness in Christ to embrace and entertain returning sinners, &c.* 234 *to* 236

4. *If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, that Je-*

sus Christ is designed, sealed and appointed by the Father, to the Office of a Mediator, from 236 to 240

5. If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, that there is no way to Salvation but by Jesus Christ, from 240 to 246

6. If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, that the heart of Jesus Christ is as much set upon sinners now he is in Heaven, as ever it was when he was on Earth, from 246 to 249

4. If you would be good betimes then

1. You must acquaint your selves with those that are good betimes, from 249 to 254

2. If you would be good betimes, then you must shun the occasions of sin betimes, from 254 to 262

4. If you would be good betimes, then you must remember the eye of God betimes, from 262 to 265

4. If you would be good betimes, then you must hearken to the voice of Conscience betimes, from 265 to 269

5. If

5. *If you would be good betimes, then you must know wherein true happiness lies betimes from* 269 *to* 272.

6. *Lastly, If you would be good betimes, then you must break your Covenant with sin betimes: now to work you to that, you must always look upon sin under these six notions.*

1. *You must look upon sin under the notion of an Enemy, from* 272 *to* 277.

2. *Under the notion of Bonds, &c. from* 277 *to* 279.

3. *Under the notion of Fire, six resemblances between Sin and Fire, from* 279 *to* 289.

4. *Under the notion of a Thief, &c: from* 289. *to* 292.

5. *Under the notion of a Burden, &c. from* 292 *to* 296.

6. *Under the notion of a Tyrant, &c. from* 296 *to* 299.

CHAP. VIII.

1 Object. *It may be time enough hereafter to seek and serve the Lord, &c.*

This Objection answered four ways from 299 *to* 304.

2. Object. *If I should seek and*

serve the Lord in the Spring and Morning of my days, I should lose the love and favour of such and such friends and relations.

Four answers to this Objection, &c.
from 304 *to* 311

3. Object. *I shall meet with many reproaches.*

Eight answers to this Objection,
from 311 *to* 326.

4. Object. *Most men give liberty to themselves, and walk in ways more pleasing to the flesh.*

This objection answered five ways,
from 326 *to* 339.

5. Object. *The last (I shall mention) is, that God is a God of mercy, in him are bowels of mercy, yea a Sea and Ocean of Mercy, he delights in mercy, &c.*

Five answers to this objection,
from 339 *to* 349.

CHAP. IX.

Lastly, The old mans doubts resolved in eight several answers,
from 349 *to the end.*

THE

THE Young Man's Duty, AND EXCELLENCY.

1 Kings XIV. 13.

And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: For he only of Jeroboam shall come to the Grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.

I Shall only stand upon the latter part of this Verse, because that affords me matter most suitable to my design.

——Because in him there is found some good thing towards the

Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

These words are a commendation of *Abijah's* life; *In him were found some good thing towards the Lord*, &c. When *Abijah* was a Child, *verse* 3. 12. When he was in his young and tender years he had the Seeds of Grace in him, he had the Image of God upon him, he could discern between good and evil, and he did that which pleased the Lord.

נער
'Tis used for a young man or stripling, *Gen.* 22. 5. and often for a Servant tho he be a man of ripe years, *Esth.* 2. 2. Such as one Evangelist calleth young men, *Luke* 12. 45. another calleth fellow Servants, *Mat.* 5. 29.

The Hebrew word (*Nagnar*) translated *Child*, *verse* 3. is very often applyed to such as we call Youths or young men, *Exod.* 24. 5. *Numb.* 6. 11. 1 *Sam.* 2. 17. &c.

Of such age and prudence was *Abijah*, as that he could choose good, and refuse evil; he was as *Lot* in *Sodom*, he was good among the bad, the bent and frame of his heart was towards that which was good; when the heart both of his Father and Mother was set upon evil.

Abijah

Abijah began to be good betimes he croſt that Peſtilent Proverb, *A young Saint and an old Devil*. 'Tis the glory and goodneſs of God, that he will take notice of the leaſt good that is in any of his, 1 *Kings* 3. 6. There was but one good word in *Sarah*'s Speech to *Abraham*, and that was this, ſhe called him *Lord*, and this God mentions for her honour and commendation, *She called him Lord*: God looks more upon one grain of Wheat, than upon a heap of Chaff; upon one ſhining Pearl, than upon an heap of rubbiſh. God finds a Pearl in *Abijah*, and he puts it into his Crown, to his eternal commendation. *There was found in him ſome good thing towards the Lord*, &c. For the words;

There was found in him. The Hebrew word *Matſa*, ſometimes ſignifies finding without ſeeking, *Iſa.* 65. 1. *I am found of them that ſought me not*: So *Pſal.* 116. 3. *The ſorrows of Death compaſſed me,*

and the pains of Hell gat hold upon me, I found trouble and sorrow. I found trouble which I looked not for, I was not searching after sorrow, but I found it. There is an elegancy in the Original. *The pains of Hell gat hold upon me.* So we read, but the Hebrew is, The pains of Hell *found me* (one word signifies both) they found me, I did not find them. *There was found in Abijah some good thing towards the Lord, i. e.* There was found in him without searching or seeking, some good thing towards the Lord, it was plain and visible enough, men might see and observe it without enquiring or seeking, they might run and read some good thing in him towards the Lord.

Secondly, The word sometimes signifies finding by *seeking* or enquiry, *Isa.* 55. 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,* &c. So upon search and enquiry there was found in *Abijah* (though young) some good thing towards the Lord.

Third-

Thirdly, Sometimes the Word notes the obtaining of that which is sufficient, *Josh.* 17. 16. *Numb.* 11. 22. *Judg.* 21. 14. In *Abijah* there was that good in him towards the Lord, that was sufficient to evidence the work of Grace upon him, sufficient to satisfie himself and others of the goodness and happiness of his condition, though he died in the prime and flower of his days, *&c.*

And in him was found some good thing; the Hebrew word (*Tob*) that is here rendred *good*, signifies.

First, That which is right and just, 2 *Sam.* 15: 3. *See thy matters are good and right*, i. e. just and right.

Secondly, That which is profitable, *Deut.* 6. 11. *Houses of all good things*, i. e. Houses full of all profitable things.

Thirdly, that which is pleasing, 2 *Sam.* 19. 27. *Do what is good in thine eyes*, i. e. do what is pleasing, in thine eyes.

Fourthly, That which is full, and compleat, *Gen.* 25. 15. *Thou shalt be buried in a good old age*, i. e. thou shalt be buried when thine age is *full* and *compleat*.

Fifthly, That which is joyful and delightful, 1 *Sam.* 25. 8. *We come in a good day*, i. e. we come in a joyful and delightful day; Now put all together, and you may see, that there was found in *Abijah* (when he was young) that which was right and just, that which was pleasing and profitable, and that which was matter of joy and delight.

In the words you have two things that are most considerable.

First, That this young mans goodness was towards the Lord God of *Israel*; many there are that are good, nay, very good towards men, who are yet bad, yea, very bad towards God. Some there are who are very kind to the Creature, and yet very unkind to their Creator; many mens good-

This Age affords many such Hypocrites such Monsters, &c.

ness towards the Creature, is like the rising Sun; but their goodness towards the Lord is like a morning cloud, or as the early dew, which is soon dryed up by the Sun-beams; but *Abijah*'s goodness was towards the Lord, his goodness faced the Lord, it looked towards the glory of God. Two things make a good Christian, good actions, and good aims; and though a good aim doth not make a bad action, good, (as in *Uzzah*) yet a bad aim makes a good action bad, (as in *Jehu*) whose justice was approved, but his policy punished; the first Chapter of *Hosea*, and the fourth Verse; doubtless *Abijahs* actions were good, and his aims good; and this was indeed his glory, that his goodness was towards the Lord.

Hos. 6. 4.

There may be *Malum opus in bonâ materiâ*, as in *Jehu*'s Zeal.

It's recorded of the *Catanenses*, that they made a stately Monument of kingly Magnificence, in remembrance of two Sons, who took their aged Parents upon

their backs, and carried them through the fire, when their Fathers house was all in a flame; these Young men were good towards their Parents, but what is this to *Abijah's goodness towards the Lord*? &c. A man cannot be good towards the Lord, but he will be good towards others; but a man may be good towards others, that is not good towards the Lord; Oh that mens practices did not give too loud a testimony every day to this Assertion, &c.

Happy are those Souls that with the Sturgeon or Crabfish can swim against the stream of custom and example; and that with *Atticus* can cleave to the right, tho' losing side.

Secondly; He was good among the bad; *He was good in the house of Jeroboam*; 'Tis in fashion to seem (at least) to be good among the good, but to be really good among those that are bad, that are eminently bad, argues not only a truth of goodness, but a great degree of goodness; this young man was good *in the house of Jeroboam who made all Israel to sin*, who was naught, who was very naught, who was stark naught; and yet

Abijah

Abijah, as the Fishes which live in the Salt-Sea are fresh; so though he lived in a (sink) Sea of wickedness, yet he retained his *Goodness toward the Lord.*

They say, Roses grow the sweeter, when they are planted by Garlick: They are sweet and rare Christians indeed, who hold their goodness, and grow in goodness, where wickedness sits on the Throne, and such a one the young man in the Text was.

To be Wheat among Tares, Corn among Chaff, Pearls among Cockles, and Roses among Thorns, is excellent.

To be a *Jonathan* in *Saul's* Court, to be an *Obadiah* in *Ahab's* Court, to be an *Obedmelech* in *Zedekiah's* Court, and to be an *Abijah* in *Jeroboam's* Court, is a wonder, a miracle.

To be a *Lot* in *Sodom*, to be an *Abraham* in *Chaldea*, to be a *Daniel* in *Babylon*, to be a *Nehemiah* in *Damasco*, and to be a *Job* in the Land of *Uz*, is to be a Saint among

among Devils, and such a one the man in the Text was.

The Poets affirm that *Venus* never appeared so beauteous as when she sate by black *Vulcan*'s side. Gracious Souls shine most clear, when they be set by black condition'd persons; *Stephen*'s face never shin'd so angelically, so gloriously (in the Church) where all were vertuous, as before the Council, where all were vicious and malicious. So *Abijah* was a bright Star, a shining Sun in *Jeroboam*'s Court, which for prophaneness and wickedness was a very Hell.

The words which I have chosen to insist upon, afford us several Observations, but I shall only name one, which I intend to prosecute this time, and that is this, *viz.*

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

That it is a very desirable and commendable thing for young men to be really good betimes.

OTher Scriptures speak out this to be a truth, besides what you have in the Text to confirm it, as that of the second of *Chronicles*, Chapter 34. 1, 2, 3. verses. *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years, and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his Father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left; For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his Father; And in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem, from the High Places, and the Groves, and the carved Images, and the molten Images.* 'Twas *Obadiah's* honour, that he feared the Lord from his

his youth; and *Timothy's* Crown, that he knew the Scriptures from a Child; and St. *John's* joy, that he found Children walking in the truth; this revived his good old heart, and made it dance for joy in his bosom. To spend further time in the proving of this truth, would be but to light Candles to see the Sun at noon.

1 King. 18. 12. 1 Tim. 3 15 2 Epist. verse 4.

The grounds and reasons of this Point; *viz.*

That it is a very desirable and commendable thing for young men to be really good betimes, are these that follow.

Deut. 6. 5. ch. 11. 13. *Augustine* begin neth one of his Sermons thus, (*Ad vos mihi Sermo, O Juvenes, flos ætatis periculum mentis*, Aug de temp. Ser. 156. "To you is my speech, O young men; the flower of age, the danger of the mind.

Reason I.

First; Because the Lord commands it, and Divine Commands are not to be disputed, but obeyed. In the 12th Chapter of *Ecclesiastes*, and the first Verse; *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them*; Remember now, I say, now: Now is an Atom will puzzle the wisdom of a Philo-

sopher,

sopher, the skill of an Angel to divide: *Now* is a Monosyllable in all Learned Languages.

Remember now thy Creator; Remember him presently, instantly, for thou dost not know what a day, what an hour may bring forth, thou canst not tell what deadly Sin, what deadly Temptation, what deadly Judgment may overtake thee; if thou dost not now, even now *remember thy Creator*.

Remember now thy Creator; Remember to know him, remember to love him, remember to desire him, remember to delight in him, remember to depend upon him, remember to get an Interest in him, remember to live to him, and remember to walk with him. *Remember now thy Creator*; the Hebrew is *Creators*, Father, Son, and Spirit. To the making of Man a Council was called in Heaven, in the first of *Genesis*, and 29 *verse*. *Remember thy Creators*, Remember the Father so as to know him, so as to be inwardly acquainted with him, remember the

Son

Son, so as to believe in him, so as to rest upon him, so as to embrace him, and so as to make a compleat resignation of thy self to him. Remember the Spirit so as to hear his voice, so as to obey his voice, so as to feel his presence, and so as to experience his influence, &c.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth; he doth not say in the *time* of thy youth, but *in the days of thy youth*; to note, that our life is but a few days; it is but a vapour, a span, a flower, a shadow, a dream; and therefore *Seneca* saith well, *That though Death be before the old man's face, yet he may be at near the young man's back*, &c.

Aug. l. 1. Confess.

Mans life is the shadow of smoke, the dream of a shadow; one doubteth whether to call it a dying life, or a living death.

Ah! Young men, God commands you to be good betimes. Remember, Young men, that it is a dangerous thing to neglect one of his Commands, who by another is able to command you into

into nothing, or into Hell. To act or run cross to Gods express Command (though under pretence of Revelation from God) is as much as a mans life is worth, as you may see in that sad story, 1 *Kings* 13. *verse* 24, &c.

Let young men put all their carnal Reasons, though never so many and weighty, into one Scale, and Gods absolute Command into the other, and then write *Tekel* upon all their reasons; they are *weighed in the Ballance and found too light.*

Ah Sirs! what God commands must be put in speedy execution, without denying, or delaying, or disputing the difficulties that attend it. Most young men in these days, do as the Heathens, when their Gods called for a Man, they offered a Candle; or as *Hercules* offered up a painted man instead of a living. When God calls upon young men to serve him with the Primrose of their youth, they usually put him off till

Obedientia non disputit Dii mandata, sed facit. Prosper.

till they are overtaken with trembling joynts, dimmed eyes, fainting hearts, failing hands and feeble knees, but there will be bitterness in the end, &c.

Reason II.

Because they have means and opportunities of being good betimes.

Young men must be really good betimes.

Never had men better means and greater opportunities of being good, of doing goood, and of receiving good than now. Ah Lord! how knowing, how believing, how holy, how heavenly, how humble might young men be, were they not wanting to their own Souls? Young men might be good, very good, yea, eminently good, would they but improve the means of Grace, the tenders of Mercy, and the knockings of Christ by his Word, Works and Spirit.

Erasmus. The Ancients painted Opportunity with an hairy forehead, but bald behind, to signifie, that while a Man hath Opportunity before him,

him, he may lay hold on it, but if he suffer it to slip away, he cannot pull it back again.

How many young men are now in everlasting Chains, who would give ten thousand Worlds (had they so many in their hands to give) to enjoy but an opportunity to hear one Sermon more, to make one Prayer more, to keep one Sabbath more, but cannot? This is the Hell of their Torment: This is the Scorpion that is still biting, this is the Worm that is always gnawing. Woe, woe to us, that we have neglected and trifled away those golden opportunities that once we had to get our Sins pardoned, our Natures changed, our Hearts bettered, our Consciences purged, and our Souls saved, &c. * I have read of a King, who having no issue to succeed him, espying one day a well favoured Youth, took him to Court, and committed him to Tutors, to instruct him, providing by his Will, that if he proved

* Bellarm. in Concion de cruciatibus Gehennæ.

proved fit for Government, he should be crowned King, if not he should be bound in Chains and made a Gally-slave. Now when he grew to years, the King's Executors perceiving that he had sadly neglected those means and opportunities whereby he might have been fit for State government called him before them, and declared the Kings Will and Pleasure concerning him, which was accordingly performed; for they caused him to be fettered, and committed to the Gallyes. Now what Tongue can express how much he was affected and afflicted with his sad and miserable estate, especially when he considered with himself, that now he is chained, who might have walked at liberty; Now he is a Slave, who might have been a King; now he is over-ruled by Turks, who might once have ruled over Christians? The Application is easie.

Ab

Ah young men, young men, shall Satan take all Opportunities to tempt you? shall the World take all opportunities to allure you? shall wicked men take all opportunities to insnare you, and to undo you? and shall Christian Friends take all opportunities to better you? and shall God's faithful Messengers take all opportunities to save you? and will you, *will you neglect so great salvation?* *Plutarch* writes of *Hannibal*, that when he could have taken *Rome*, he would not; and when he would have taken *Rome*, he could not. Many in their youthful days, when they might have Mercy, Christ, Pardon, and Heaven, they will not; and in old age, when they would have Christ, Pardon, Peace, Heaven, they cannot, they may not. God seems to say, as *Theseus* said once, Go, says he, and tell *Creon*, *Theseus* offers thee a gracious offer, yet I am pleased to be friends, if thou wilt submit (this is my first mes-

'Tis story'd of *Charles* King of *Sicily* and *Jerusalem*, that he was called *Carolus claudicator*, *Charles* the lingerer: This age affords many such lingerers, &c.

message) but if this offer prevail not, look for me to be up in Arms.

Reason III.

Why young men should be really good betimes. [illegible], [illegible], [illegible], [illegible] *levid* [illegible]; the greater was his sin, and the more were his sorrows.

Because then they have fewer and lesser sins to answer for, and repent of, multitudes of sins and sorrows are prevented by being good betimes.

The more we number our days, the fewer sins we shall have to number. As a Copy is then safest from blotting, when dust is put upon it; so are we from sinning, when (in the time of our youth) we remember that we are but dust. The tears of young Penitents do more scorch the Devils, than all the flames of Hell, for hereby all their hopes are blasted, and the great underminer countermined and blown up. *Mane* is the Devils Verb, he bids tarry, time enough to repent; but *Mane* is God's Adverb, and he bids repent early, in the morning of thy youth; for then thy sins will be

fewer

fewer and lesser. Well, Young men, remember this, He that will not at the first hand buy good Counsel cheap, shall at the second hand buy Repentance over dear.

Ah! Young men, young men, if you do not begin to be good betimes, those sins that are now as Jewels sparkling in your eyes, will at last be mill-stones about your necks to sink you for ever.

Psal. 25. 7. Job 13. 26.

——— Among many things that *Baxter* in his last Will and Testament gave God thanks for, this was the first and chief; that he at the age of sixteen years, had called him to the knowledge of the Truth, and so prevented many sins and sorrows, that otherwise would have overtaken him, and have made his life less happy, and more miserable. Young Saints often prove old Angels, but old Sinners seldom prove good Saints, *&c.*

There is nothing puts a more serious frame into a mans spirit, than to know the worth of his time.

Reason IV.

Why young men should be really good betimes.

Because time is a precious Talent that

that young men must be countable for.

The sooner they begin to be good the more easie will be their account; especially as to that great Talent of Time. *Cato* and other Heathens held, that account must be given, not only of our labour, but also of our leisure; at the great day it will appear, that they that have spent their time in mourning, have done better than they that have spent their time in dancing; and they that have spent many days in *humiliation*, than they that have spent many days in *idle recreations*.

I have read of a devout man who when he heard a clock strike he would say, Here is one hour more past that I have to answer for. Ah young men, as time is very precious, so it is very short; time is very swift, it is suddenly gone; in the ninth of *Job*, and the 25 *Verse*, *My days are swifter than a Post, they fly away, they see no good.* The Hebrew word (*Kalal*) translated *swifter*

than

than a post, signifies any thing that is light, because light things are quick in motion.

The Ancients emblemed Time with Wings, as it were, not running but flying. Time is like the Sun, that never stands still, but is still a running his race; the Sun did once stand still, yea, went back, but so did never time. Time is still running and flying; it is a bubble, a shadow, a dream; can you seriously consider of this, young men, and not *begin to be goood betimes*? surely you cannot. Sirs, if the whole earth whereupon we tread, were turned into a lump of Gold, it were not able to purchase one minute of time: Oh the regretting of the damned, for mis-pending precious time! Oh what would they not give to be free, and to enjoy the means of grace one hour! Ah! with what attention, with what intention, with what trembling and melting of heart, with what hungring and thirsting would they hear the Word!

Sophocles. Euripides.

Who is there among us that knows how to value time, and prize a day at a due rate? *Sen. Epist.*

Word! Time (saith *Bernard*) was a good commodity in Hell, and the traffick of it most gainful, when for one day a man would give ten thousand Worlds if he had them. Young men, can you in good earnest believe this, and not begin to be good betimes?

A Heathen said, He lived no day without a line, that is, he did something remarkable every day.

Ah! Young Men and Women, as you love your precious immortal Souls, as you would escape Hell, and come to Heaven, as you would be happy in Life, and blessed in Death, and glorious after Death; don't spend any more of your precious Time, in drinking and drabbing, in carding, dicing, and dancing; don't trifle away your Time; don't sweet away your Time; don't whore away your Time; don't lye away your Time, but begin to be good betimes, because Time is a Talent that God will reckon with you for: Ah! Young Men and Women, you may reckon upon years, many years yet to come, when possibly you have

not so many hours to make ready your accompts; it may be this night you may have a Summons, and then if your time be done, and your work be to begin, in what a sad case will you be? will you not wish that you had never been born?

Seneca was wont to jear the *Jews* for their ill husbandry, in that they lost one day in seven; meaning their Sabbath; O that it were not too true of the most of Professors, both young and old, that they lose not only one day in seven, but several days in seven.

Sirs! Time let slip cannot be recalled, the foolish Virgins found it so, and *Saul* found it so, and *Herod* found it so, and *Nero* found it so, the *Israelites* found it so; yea, and *Jacob*, and *Josiah*, and *David*, (though good men) yet they found it so to their cost.

Mat. 25. 5.

(2 Sam. 12. 13. Heb. 3. 17, 18, 19.

The *Egyptians* draw the Picture of Time with three Heads; the first of a greedy Wolf, gaping for Time past; because it hath

ravenously devoured the memo
of so many things past recalli
The

Second, Of a Crowned Lion ro
ing for time present, becaus
hath the principality of all actio
for which it calls loud. The

Third, Of a deceitful Dog fa
ing for time to come, becaus
feeds some men with many fla
tering hopes, to their eternal u
doing: Ah! young men and w
men, as you would give up yo
accounts at last with joy concerni
this talent of time, with which G
hath trusted you, *begin to be go
betimes*, &c.

Why young persons should be really good betimes.

Seneca (tho' a Heathen) could say, Believe me, true Joy is no light thing.

Reason V.

*Because they will have the grea
comfort and joy when they co
to be old.*

The 71. *Psalm* 5. 17, 18. com
pared. *Thou art my hope, O Lo
God; Thou art my trust, from my
youth, O God thou hast taught
from*

from my youth, and hitherto I have declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God forsake me not; untill I have shewed thy strength unto this Generation, and thy power unto every one that is to come.

Polycarpus could say, when old, Thus many years have I served my Master Christ, and hitherto hath he dealt well with me. If early Converts live to be old, no joy to their joy; their joy will be the greatest joy, a joy like to the joy of Harvest, a joy like to their joy that divide the spoil; their joy will be the soundest joy, the weightiest joy, the Holiest joy, the purest joy, the strongest joy, and the most lasting joy; the Carnal joy of the Wicked, the Glistering (Golden) joy of the Worldling, and the Flashing joy of the Hypocrite, is but as the crackling of Thorns under a Pot, to the joy and comfort of such, who when old, can say with good *Obadiah*, *That they feared the Lord from*

Isa. 9. 3.

from their youth. If when you are young, your eyes shall be full of tears (for sin) when you are old your heart will be full of joy. Such shall have the best Wine at last.

Oh! *That Young men would begin to be good betimes,* that so they may have the greater Harvest of Joy, when they come to be old, &c. 'Tis sad to be sowing your seed when you should be reaping your Harvest: 'Tis best to gather the Summer of Youth, against the Winter of Old Age.

Why Young men should be really good betimes, Luk. 10. 25.

Reason VI.

Because an Eternity of felicity and glory, hangs upon those few moments that are allotted to them.

It was a good question the young man proposed, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* I know I shall be eternally happy, or eternally miserable, eternally blest, or eternally curst, eternally saved, or eternally damned, &c.

O what shall I do to inherit eternal life! my cares, my fears, my troubles are all about Eternity; no Time can reach Eternity, no Age can extend to Eternity, no Tongue can express Eternity. Eternity is that (*unum perpetuum hodie*) one perpetual day, which shall never have end; what shall I do, what shall I not do, that I may be happy to all Eternity?

Æternitas est semper, & immutabilis est. The old *Romans* were out that thought Eternity dwelt in Statues and in Marble Monuments

I am now young, and in the flower of my days; but who knows what a day may bring forth? the greatest weight hangs upon the smallest Wires, and Eternity depends upon those few hours I am to breathe in the World; O! what cause have I therefore to be good betimes, to know God betimes, to believe betimes, to repent betimes, to get my peace made, and my pardon sealed betimes, to get my Nature changed, my Conscience purged, and my Interest in Christ cleared betimes, before Eternity overtakes me, before my Glass be out,

my Sun set, my Race Run, lest the dark night of eternity should overtake me, and I made miserable for ever.

I have read of one (*Myrognes*) who when great gifts were sent unto him, he sent them all back again; saying, I only desire this one thing at your Masters hand; to pray for me that I may be saved for eternity. O that all young men and women, who make Earth their Heaven, Pleasure their Paradise, that eat of the fat, and drink the sweet, that cloath themselves richly, and crown their heads with Rose-buds, that they would seriously consider of eternity, so to hear as for eternity, and pray as for eternity, and live as for eternity, and provide as for eternity! that they may say with that famous Painter *Zeuxes* (*Æternitati pingo*) I paint for eternity: we do all for eternity, we believe for eternity, we repent for eternity, we obey for eternity, *&c.*

Luke 15 19, 20.

Oh that you would not make those

those things eternal for punishment, that cannot be eternal for use.

Cur ea quæ ad usum diuturna esse non possunt, ad supplicium diuturnum deposcet? Ambrose in *Luk.* 4. *t.* 5.

Ah! Young men and women, Christ calls, and the blood of Jesus Christ calls, and the Spirit of Christ in the Gospel calls, and the rage of Satan calls, and your sad State and Condition calls, and the Happiness and Blessedness of Glorified Saints call; these all call aloud upon you to make sure a glorious Eternity, before you sail out into the dreadful Ocean. All your eternal good depends upon the short and uncertain moments of your lives; and if the thread of your lives should be cut before a happy eternity is made sure, woe to you that ever you were born; Do not say, O Young Man, that thou art young, and hereafter will be time enough to provide for Eternity; for Eternity may be at the door ready to carry thee away for ever. Every days experience speaks out Eternity to be as near the young mans back,

as 'tis before the old mans face. O grasp to day the Diadem of a blessed Eternity, lest thou art cut off before the morning comes: Though there is but one way to come into this World, yet there is a thousand thousand ways to be sent out of this World: Well young men and Women, remember this, if the motions of the Soul are quick, so are the motions of Divine Justice quick also, and if you will not hear the voice of God to day, if you will not provide for eternity to day, God may swear to morrow that you shall never enter into his rest; it is a very sad and dangerous thing to trifle and dally with God, his Word, his Offers, our own Souls and Eternity: Therefore let all young people labour to be good betimes, and not to let him that is Goodness it self, alone, till he hath made them good, till he hath given them those hopes of Eternity, that will both make them good, and keep them

Heb. 3. 7, 8, 15, 16, 18, 19.

good.

good, that will make them happy, and keep them happy, and that for ever; if all this will not do, then know, that ere long those fears of eternity of misery, that beget that monster, Despair, which like *Medusa's* Head, astonisheth with its very aspect, and strangles Hope, which is the breath of the Soul, will certainly overtake you; as it is said, *Dum Spiro Spero*, so it may be inverted, *Dum Spero, Spiro*; other miseries may wound the spirit, but Despair kills it dead; my Prayers shall be, that none of you may ever experience this sad truth, but that you may all be good in good earnest betimes, which will yield you two Heavens, a Heaven on Earth, and a Heaven after Death.

Reason VII.

Why Young persons should be really good betimes.

Because they do not begin to live, till they begin to be really good.

Till they begin to be good, they are

are dead God-wards, and Christ-wards, and Heaven-wards, and Holiness-wards; till a man begins to be really good, he is really dead, *Philippians* 2. 1. and that,

Respectu operis.

First, In respect of working, his works are called dead works, *Heb.* 9. 13. The most glistering services of unregenerate persons, are but dead works, because they proceed not from a principle of Life, and they lead to death, *Rom.* 6. 21. and leave a sentence of death upon the Soul, till it be washed off by the Blood of the Lamb.

Secondly, He is dead in respect of Honour, he is dead to all privileges, he is not fit to inherit Mercy; who will set the Crown of Life upon a Dead Man? The Crown of Life is only for living Christians, *Revelations* 2. 10. The young Prodigal was dead, till he begun to be good, till he begun to remember his Fathers house, and to resolve to return home: *My Son was dead, but is alive;*

Luk. 15. 24.

alive; and the Widow that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth. 1 Tim. 5. 6.

When *Josaphat* asked *Barlaam*, how old he was? he answered, five and forty years old; to whom *Josaphat* replied, Thou seemest to be seventy: True, saith he, if you reckon ever since I was born; but I count not those years which were spent in vanity.

As it is a reproach to an old man to be in Coats, so 'tis a disgrace to be an old babe, i. e. to be but a babe in grace, when old in years. Heb. 5. 12, 13, 14.

Ah Sirs! you never begin to live till you begin to be good in good earnest. There is the life of Vegetation, and that is the life of Plants; Secondly, there is the life of Sense, and that is the life of Beasts; Thirdly, there is the life of Reason, and that is the life of Man; Fourthly, there is the life of Grace, and that is the life of Saints; and this life you do not begin to live, till you begin to be good: If a living Dog is better than a dead Lion, as the Wise man speaks, and if a Flie is more excellent than the Heavens, because the Flie hath

Eccl. 9. 4.

hath life, which the Heavens have not, as the Philosopher saith; what a sad, a dead poor nothing is that person that is a stranger to the life of grace and goodness, that is dead even whilst he is alive.

Mettius in *Seneca* had rather live in many diseases than dye. And *Homer* reporteth of his *Achilles*, that he had rather be a servant to a poor Country Clown here, than to be a King to all the Souls departed.

Most men will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an Estate, yea, with a limb, yea, limbs, yea, and many a better thing (*viz.* the honour of God and a good Conscience) to preserve their Natural lives: as he cries out: Give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life; and yet how few, how very few are to be found, who make it their work, their business, to attain to a life of goodness, or to begin to be good betimes, or to be dead to the World, and alive to God, rather than to be dead to God, and alive to the World? this is for a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, that natural life is so highly prized, and spiritual life so little regarded, &c.

Rea-

Reason VIII.

Because the Promise of finding God, of enjoying God, is made over to an early seeking of God.

Why young men should be really good betimes.

Prov. 8. 17. *I love them that love me, and they that seek me early, shall find me.* Or as the Hebrew hath it, they that seek me in the morning, shall find me. By the benefit of the morning light we come to find the things we seek. *Shahar* signifies to seek inquisitively, to seek diligently, to seek timely in the morning. As the *Israelites* went early in the morning, to seek for Manna. And as Students rise early in the morning, and sit close to it, to get knowledge; so saith wisdom, *They that seek me in the spring and morning of their youth, shall find me.*

שחר

Exc. 16. 21. *Scipio* went first to the Capitol and then to the Senate. *Tully* an Heathen frequently called God *Optimus maximus*, the best and greatest God *omnis super omnia.*

Now to seek the Lord early, is to seek the Lord firstly. God hath in himself all the good of Angels, of Men, and Universal Nature; he hath all glories, all dignities, all riches, all treasures, all

all pleasures, all comforts, all delights, all joys, all beatitudes; God is that one infinite perfection in himself, which is eminently, and virtually all Perfections of the creatures, and therefore he is firstly to be sought. Abstracts do better express him, than Concretes and Adjectives; he is Being, Bounty, Power, Wisdom, Justice, Mercy, Goodness, and Love it self, and therefore worthy to be sought before all other things. Seek ye first the good things of the mind, saith *Philosophy*; and doth not *Divinity* say as much?

Cicero.

Days of grace have their dates, therefore take heed of saying *Cras, Cras*, to-morrow, to-morrow.

Again, to seek early, is to seek opportunely, to seek while the opportunity does present, *Judg.* 9.33. *Thou shalt rise early, and set upon the City*; that is, thou shalt opportunely set upon the City.

Such there have been, who by giving a Glass of Water opportunely, have obtained a Kingdom, as you may see in the story of *Thamastus*, and King *Agrippa*.

Ah!

Ah! Young Men and Women, you do not know, but that by an early, by an opportune seeking of God, you may obtain a Kingdom that shakes not, and Glory that passeth not away. Heb. 12.28.

There is a season wherein God may be found: *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near?* and if you slip this season, you may seek him, and miss him. Isa. 55. 6.

Though they cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them, when they make many prayers, I will not hear: Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but shall not find me. Jer. 11. 11. Isa. 1. 15. Mic. 3. 4. Prov. 1. 8.

This was *Saul's* misery; *The Philistins are upon me, and God will not answer me*; 'tis justice that they should seek and not find at last, who might have found, had they but sought seasonably and opportunely, *&c.*

Again,

Again, To seek early, is to seek earnestly, affectionately. *With my Soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early.* Isa. 26. 9. The Hebrew word signifies both an earnest, and an early seeking. In the morning the spirits are up, and men are earnest, lively and affectionate.

Ah! such a seeking shall certainly be Crowned with finding: Psal. 5. 3 11, 12. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct* (Hebrew, martial) *my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* (Hebrew, look out like a Watchman.) *Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoyce, let them ever shout for joy; because thou defendest them,* (Hebrew, thou coverest over, or protectest them,) *Let them also that love thy Name, be joyful in thee: for thou Lord wilt bless the Righteous, with favour wilt thou compass him* (Hebrew, Crown him) *as with a Shield.* None have ever thus sought the Lord but they have, or certainly shall find

find him. *Seek and ye shall find*, Mat. 27. *Your hearts shall live that seek God*, Psalms 69. 32. *The effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous man availeth much*, James 5. 16. Or as the Greek hath it, *The working prayer of a righteous Man availeth much*; that prayer that sets the whole man to work, will work wonders in Heaven, in the Heart, and in the Earth. Earnest Prayer, like *Saul's* Sword, and *Jonathan's* Bow, never returns empty.

ἐνεργουμένη. It signifies such a working as notes the liveliest activity that can be.

One speaking of *Luther*, who was a man very earnest in Prayer, said, (*Hic homo potuit apud Deum quod voluit*:) This man could have what he would of God, *&c.*

Again, To seek early, is to seek chiefly, primarily, after this or that thing; what we first seek, we seek as chief. Now to seek the Lord early, is to seek him primarily, chiefly: In the 63. *Psalm* and 1. Verse, *Thou art my God, early will I seek thee*; that is, I will seek thee, as my choicest, and my

Omni bonum in summo bono.

my chiefest good. God is *Alpha* the Fountain from whence all grace springs, and *Omega*, the Sea to which all glory runs, and therefore early and primarily to be sought. God is a perfect good, a solid good, (*id bonum perfectum dicitur cui nil accidere, solidum cui nil decedere potest*, Lactantius;) that is a perfect good, to which nothing can be added; that a solid, from which nothing can be spared; such a good God is, and therefore early and chiefly to be sought.

1 John 1. 5. God is a pure and simple good, he is a light in whom there is no darkness, a good in whom there is no evil. The goodness of the Creature is mixt; yea, that little goodness that is in the Creature is mixed with much evil; but God is an unmixed good, he is good, he is a pure good, he is all over good, he is nothing but good. God is an All-sufficient good. *Walk before me and be upright, I am God All-sufficient*, in the 17. of *Genesis* and 1. Verse. *Habet omnia qui habet*

Quicquid in Deo, est ipse Deus.

habet habentem omnia, Aug. He hath all, that hath the haver of all. God hath in himself all power to defend you, all wisdom to direct you, all mercy to pardon you, all grace to enrich you, all righteousness to cloath you, all goodness to supply you, and all happiness to crown you. God is a satisfying good, a good that fills the heart, and quiets the Soul: In the 33. of *Genesis* and the 11. *Verse*. *I have enough*, saith good *Jacob*, *I have all*, saith *Jacob*, for so the Hebrew hath it (*Cholli*;) I have all, I have all comforts, all delights, all contents, *&c.* I having nothing, I have all things, because I have Christ; having therefore all things in him, I seek no other reward, for *he is the universal reward*, saith one. As the worth and value of many pieces of Silver is to be found in one piece of Gold; So all the petty excellencies that are scattered abroad in the Creatures, are to be found in God; yea, all the whole Volume of Perfections, which Cant. 2.2.

which is spread through Heaven and Earth, is Epitomized in him. No good, below him that is the greatest good, can satisfie the Soul; a good Wife, a good Child, a good Name, a good Estate, a good Friend, cannot satisfie the Soul; these may please, but they cannot satisfie. All abundance, if it be not my God, is to me nothing but poverty and want, said one.

Omnis copia quæ est Deus meus, mihi egestas est. Aug. Soliloq. c. 13.

All that young men and women would but in the morning of their youth, seek, yea seek early, seek earnestly, seek affectionately, seek diligently, seek primarily, and seek unweariedly this God, who is the greatest good, the best good, the most desirable good; who is a suitable good, a pure good, a satisfying good, a total good and an eternal good.

Why Young Persons should be really good betimes.

Reason IX.

Because the time of youth is the choicest and fittest time for service.

Now

Now your Parts are lively, ſenſes freſh, memory ſtrong, and nature vigorous; the days of your youth are the ſpring and morning of your time, they are the firſt-born of your ſtrength, therefore God requires your non-age, as well as your dotage, the Wine of your times, as well as the Lees, as you may ſee typified to you in the firſt-fruits, which were dedicated to the Lord, and the firſt-born. The time of youth is the time of ſalvation; it is the acceptable time, it is thy *Summer*, thy Harveſt time. O young man; therefore do not ſleep, but up and be doing, awaken thy heart, rouze up thy Soul, and improve all thou haſt, put out thy reaſon, thy ſtrength, thy all, to the treaſuring up of Heavenly Graces, precious Promiſes, divine Experiences, and ſpiritual Comforts, againſt the Winter of old age; and then old age will not be to thee an evil age, but as it was to *Abraham*, *a good old age*; do not put off God with fair

The days of youth are called, *ætas bona*, in *Cicero*, and *ætas optima* in *Seneca*.

Exod. 13. 2.

chap 22. 9.

Gen. 25. 28.

fair promises and large pretences, till your last sands are running, and the days of dotage have overtaken you. That is a sad word of the Prophet, *Cursed be the Deceiver, which hath in his flock a Male and yet offereth to the Lord a corrupt thing.*

Mal. 1. 14.

Ah! Young Men and Women who are like the Almond-tree, you have many Males in the Flock, your strength is a Male in the flock, your time is a Male in the flock, your reason is a Male in the flock, your parts are a Male in the flock, and your gifts are a Male in the flock; now if he be curst that hath but one Male in his flock, and shall offer to God a corrupt thing, a thing of no worth of no value, how will you be curst, and curst? curst at home, and curst abroad, curst temporally, curst spiritually, and curst eternally, who have many Males in your flock, and yet deal so unworthily, so fraudulently, and false-heartedly with God, as to put him off with the dreggs of your

Jer. 1. 11. The Almond Tree blossoms in January, (while it is yet winter) and the fruit is ripe in March.

your time and ſtrength while you ſpend the Primroſe of your youth in the ſervice of the World, the Fleſh and the Devil.

The Fig-tree in the Goſpel that did not bring forth Fruit timely and ſeaſonably, was curſt to admiration; the time of Youth is the time and ſeaſon for bringing forth the fruits of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, and if theſe fruits be not brought forth in their ſeaſon, you may juſtly fear, that the Curſes of Heaven will ſecretly and inſenſibly ſoak and ſink into your Souls, and then wo, wo to you that ever you were born. The beſt way to prevent this Hell of Hells, is to give God the cream and flower of your youth, your Strength, your Time, your Talent; Veſſels that are betime ſeaſoned with the ſavour of life, never loſe it, *Prov.* 22. 6.

Mat. 21. 22.

Why Young perſons ſhould be really good (in good earneſt) betimes.

Reaſon X. *Becauſe Death may ſuddenly and unex-*

expectedly seize upon you, you have no lease of your lives.

Pares nascuntur, pares morientur: in the womb, and in the tomb, they are all alike, *Job* 21. 23, 24. 'Tis an allegorical description of the highest prosperity.

Youth is as fickle as Old Age, the young man may find Graves enough of his length in burial places; as green Wood and old Logs meet in one fire; so young Sinners and old Sinners meet (in one Hell) and burn together; when the Young man is in his Spring and prime, then he is cut off, and dies. *One dieth in his full strength,* (or in the *strength of his perfection,* as the Hebrew hath it) *being wholly at ease and quiet; his Breasts are full of Milk, and his Bones are moistned with Marrow.* David's Children died when young, so did *Jobs* and *Jeroboam's*, &c. Every days experience tells us, that the Young man's life is as much a vapor as the Old man's is.

I have read of an *Italian* Poet, who brings in a proper young man, rich and potent, discoursing with Death in the Habit of a Mower, with his Sythe in his

hand

hand, cutting down the Life of Man; (*For all flesh is grass, Isa.* 40. 6.) And wilt thou not spare any man's person, saith the young man? I spare none, saith Death: Man's Life is but a day, a short day, a Winters day, oft-times the Sun goes down upon a Man, before it be well up; your day is short, your work is great, your Journey long, and therefore you should rise early, and set forward towards Heaven betimes, as that Man doth that hath a long Journey to go in a Winters day.

Death's Motto is, *Nulli cedo*, I yield to none.

The Life of Man is absolutely short, *Behold thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth.* The Life of Man is comparatively short, and that if you compare Man's Life now to what he might have reacht, had he continued in Innocency. Sin brought in Death, Death is a fall that came in by a fall. Or if you compare Man's life now, to what they did reach to before the Flood; then several lived six, seven eight, nine hundred

Psal. 39. 5.

Gen. 5.

dred years; or if you compare mens days with the days of God *Mine Age is as nothing before thee*, or if you compare the days of man to the days of Eternity.

Psal. 39. 5.

The Heathen could say, that the whole life of man should be nothing else but (*Meditatio mortis*) a meditation of Death.

Ah! young men, young men, can you seriously consider of the brevity of mans life, and trifle away your time, the offers of Grace your precious Souls, and Eternity, &c? Surely you cannot, surely you dare not; if you do but in good earnest ponder upon the shortness of mans Life. It is recorded of *Philip* King of *Macedon* that he gave a Pension to one to come to him every day at Dinner and to cry to him, *Memento te esse mortalem*, Remember thou art but mortal.

Ah! Young men and Old had need be often put in mind of their mortality, they are too apt to forget that day, yea, to put far from them the thoughts of that day. I have read of three that could not endure to hear that bitter word

[Death

Deeth mentioned in their ears; and ſurely this age is full of ſuch Monſters.

And as the Life of man is very ſhort ſo it is very uncertain; now well, now ſick, alive this hour, and dead the next. Death doth not always give warning before hand, ſometimes he gives the mortal blow ſuddenly; he comes behind with his Dart, and ſtrikes a man at the heart before he ſaith, *Have I found thee O mine Enemy?* *Eutychus* fell down dead ſuddenly, *Acts* 20. 9. Death ſuddenly arreſted *David's* Sons, and *Job's* Sons; *Auguſtus* died in a Complement; *Galba* with a Sentence, *Veſpaſian* with a Jeſt, *Xeuxes* died laughing at the Picture of an old Woman which he drew with his own hand; *Sophocles* was choaked with the ſtone in a Grape; *Diodorus* the Logician died for ſhame that he could not anſwer a joculary queſtion propounded at the Table by *Stilpo*; *Joannes Meaſius* preaching upon the raiſing of the Woman

Petrarch telleth of one who being invited to dinner the next day, anſwered, *Ego à multis annis craſtinum non habui.* I have not had a morrow for this many years.

of *Naims* Son from the dead, within three hours after died himself.

Ah Young Men and Women: have you not cause, great cause to be good betimes, for Death is sudden in his approaches; nothing more sure than Death, and nothing more uncertain than Life: therefore know the Lord betimes, turn from your sins betimes, lay hold on the Lord, and make peace with him betimes, that you may never say as *Cæsar Borgias* said, when he was sick to death, When I lived (said he) I provided for every thing but Death; now I must die, and am unprovided to die, &c.

Reason XI.

Why young persons should be really good betimes.

Because it is ten to one, nay an hundred to one, if ever they are converted, if they are not converted when they are young.

God

God usually begins with such betimes, that he hath had thoughts of love and mercy towards from everlasting: The instances cited to prove the Doctrine, confirm this Argument; and if you look abroad in the World, you shall hardly find one Saint among a thousand, but dates his conversion from the time of his Youth. 'Twas the young ones that got through the wilderness into *Canaan*. If the Tree do not bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit in the Spring, it is commonly dead all the year after; If in the spring and morning of your days, you do not bring forth fruit to God, it is an hundred to one that ever you bring forth fruit to him when the evil days of old Age shall overtake you, wherein you shall say, you have no pleasure. For, as the Son of *Syrak* observes, If thou hast gathered nothing in thy youth, what canst thou find in thy age? 'Tis rare, very rare that God sows and reaps in old

Hos. 11. 1. *When Israel was a Child, then I loved him, &c.*

Numb. 26. 4.

An Hebrew Doctor observes, that of those six hundred thousand that went out of *Ægypt*, there were but two persons that entred *Canaan*.

Eccl. 2. 55.

age, usually God sows the seed of Grace in Youth, that yields the Harvest of Joy in Age.

Though true Repentance be never too late, yet late Repentance is seldom true. Millions are now in Hell, who have pleased themselves with the thoughts of after-Repentance. The Lord hath made a Promise to late Repentance, but where hath he made a Promise of late Repentance? Yea, what can be more just and equal, that such should seek, and not find, who might have found, but would not seek; and that he should shut his Ears against their late Prayers, who have stopt their Ears against his early Calls? The Ancient Warriours would not accept an old Man into their Army, as being unfit for service; and dost thou think that God will accept of thy dry Bones, when Satan hath suck'd out all the Marrow? What Lord, what Master will take such into their Service, who have all their days served their enemies?

Prov. 1. 24, 32.

enemies? and will God? will God? The *Circaſſians* (a kind of Mungrel Chriſtians) are ſaid to divide their life between ſin and devotion, dedicating their Youth to rapine, and their Old Age to Repentance: If this be thy caſe, I would not be in thy caſe for Ten thouſand Worlds.

Brerew. Enqui.

I have read of a certain great Man, that was admoniſhed in his ſickneſs to repent; who anſwered, That he would not repent yet, for if he ſhould recover, his Companions would laugh at him; but growing ſicker and ſicker, his friends preſſed him again to repent, but then he told them it was too late, (*Qui jam judicatus ſum & condemnatus*) for now, ſaid he, I am judged and condemned.

Beda hath this ſtory.

Reaſon XII.

Becauſe elſe they will never attain to the honour of being Old Diſciples.

CHAP. II.

It is a very great honour to be an Old Disciple.

NOW this honour none reach to but such as are converted betimes, but such as turn to the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth: 'tis no honour for an old Man to be in Coats, nor for an old Man to be a Babe in grace. An A, B, C, old Man, is a sad and shameful sight: O but it is a mighty honour to a Man when he is old, that he can date his Conversion from the morning of his youth. Now that it is an honour to be an Old Disciple, I shall prove by an induction of Particulars. As,

What more ridiculous than (*puer centum annorum*) a child of an hundred years old.

Particular I.

A Crown is a very glorious thing, but there are but few of them worn

All men will honour an Old Disciple, Prov. 16. 31. *The hoary head is a Crown of Glory, if it be found in the way of Righteousness,* God requires that the Aged should be honoured.

noured, *Levit.* 19. 32. *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary Head, and honour the face of the old man,* (the *old man* here, is expounded by some, the *wise man*) *and fear thy God: I am the Lord.* Hoarineſs is only honorable, when found in a way of righteouſneſs, a white Head accompanied with a Holy Heart, makes a man truly honorable. There are two glorious ſights in the World, the one is, a young man walking in his uprightneſs, and the other is an old man walking in the ways of righteouſneſs; 'Twas *Abraham's* honour, that he went to the Grave in a *good old age*; or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, with a *good gray head*. Many there be that go to their Graves with a gray head, but this was *Abraham's* Crown, that he went to the Grave with a *good* gray head; had *Abraham's* head been never ſo gray, if it had not been good, it would have been no honour to him; a hoary head, when coupledh with an unſanctified Heart, is rater a curſe than a bleſſing, Gen. 25. 8.

blessing, when the Head is white as Snow, and the Soul as black as Hell; God usually gives up such to the greatest scorn and contempt. *Princes are hanged up by the hands, the faces of Elders were not honoured*: and this God had threatned long before. *The Lord shall bring against thee a Nation from far, a Nation of fierce Countenance, which shall not regard the person of the Old, nor shew favour to the Young.*

Isa. 65. 20.

Lam. 5. 12.

Deut. 28. 49, 50.

I have read of *Cleanthes*, who was wont sometimes to chide himself: *Ariston* wondering thereat, asked him, Whom chidest thou? *Cleanthes* laughed, and answered, I chide an old fellow, (*qui canos quidem habet, sed mentem non habet*;) who hath his gray hairs indeed, but wants understanding and prudence worthy of them. The Application I will leave to the gray heads, and gray beards of our time, who have little else to commend them to the World, but their hoary heads, and snowy beards.

Parti-

Particular II.

God usually reveals himself most to Old Disciples, to Old Saints, Job 12. 12. *With the Ancient is Wisdom, and in length of days Understanding.* God usually manifests most of himself to Aged Saints; they usually pray most, and pay most, they labour most, and long most after the choicest manifestations of himself, and of his Grace; and therefore he opens his bosom most to them, and makes them of his Cabinet-council, *Gen.* 18. 17, 19. *And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? for I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.* *Abraham* was an old friend, and therefore God makes him both of his Court and Council: We usually open our Hearts most freely, fully, and familiarly, to

בישושים In the ancient is wisdom. *Valentinianus* the Emperors Motto, was (*Amicus veterrimus optimus*) an Old friend is best.

to old Friends, so doth God to his antient Friends. Ah! what a blessed sight and enjoyment of Christ had old *Simeon*, that made his very heart to dance in him! *Now Lord, lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace, according to thy Word; for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation*, &c. I have seen him who is my Light, my Life, my Love, my Joy, my Crown, my Heaven, my All; therefore now let thy *Servant depart in peace*. So *Anna*, when she was fourscore and four years old, was so filled with the discoveries and enjoyments of Christ, that she could not but declare what she had tasted, felt, seen, heard, and received from the Lord. She was ripe, and ready to discover the fulness, sweetness, goodness, excellency and glory of that Christ whom she had long loved, feared and served. So *Paul* lived in the light, sight, and sweet enjoyments of Christ, when aged in years, in Grace. So, when had *John* that glorious Vision of Christ among

Luk. 2. 25, 26, 27, 28.

Verse 35, 37, 38.

Phil. 4. 5, 7, 9.

Rev. 1. 7, to ult.

the

the Golden Candlesticks, and those discoveries and manifestations of the Ruine of *Rome*, the Fall of Antichrist, the casting the Beast and false Prophet into a Lake of Fire, the Conquest of the Kingdoms of the World by Christs Bow and Sword, the binding of Satan, and the New *Jerusalem* coming down from God out of Heaven, but when he was old, when he was aged in Years and in Grace? The Lord speaks many a secret in the Ears of aged Saints, of old Christians, which young Christians are not acquainted with; as that Phrase imports, 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. *Thou O Lord God of Hosts, hast revealed to thy Servant*; so you read it in your Books, but in the Hebrew it is, Lord, thou hast revealed this *to the Ear of* thy Servant. Some wonder how that word *to the Ear* came to be left out in your Books, in which indeed the *Emphasis* lies; we will tell many things in an old Friends Ear, which we will not acquaint young ones with. So doth God many

גלית אזן
Glaitha Ethezen.

times

times whisper an Old Disciple in the Ear, and acquaints him with such things that he hides from those that are of younger years; and by this you may see what an honour it is to be an Old Disciple.

Particular III.

An Old Disciple, an Old Christian, he hath got the Art of serving God, the Art of Religion, got the Art of Hearing, the Art of Praying, the Art of Meditating, the Art of Repenting, the Art of Believing, the Art of Denying his Natural Self, his Sinful Self, his Religious Self.

Heb. 5. 11, 12, 13, 14. Yet as Solomon was not ashamed to say, that in his old age he was a learner, so those that are the greatest Artists in Christianity, will confess that they are still but learners.

All Trades have their Mystery and difficulty; so hath the Trade of Christianity; young Christians usually bungle in Religious works, but old Christians acquit themselves like Work-men that need not be ashamed. A young Carpenter gives more blows, and makes more Chips, but an old Artist doth the most and best work; a young Christian may make most noise in Religious Duties, but an old

old Chriſtian makes the beſt work. A young Muſician may play more quick and nimble upon an Inſtrument than an old, but an old Muſician hath more skill and Judgment than a Young: The Application is eaſie; and by this you may alſo ſee, *what an honour it is to be an old Chriſtian.*

Particular IV.

An Old Diſciple, an old Chriſtian is rich in ſpiritual Experiences. O the Experiences that he hath of the ways of God, of the workings of God, of the Word of God, of the love of God! O the divine ſtories that old Chriſtians can tell of the power of the Word, of the ſweetneſs of the Word, of the uſefulneſs of the Word! as a light to lead the ſoul, as a ſtaff to ſupport the ſoul, as a ſpirit to quicken the ſoul, as an anchor to ſtay the ſoul, and as a Cordial to comfort and ſtrengthen the ſoul! O the ſtories that he can tell you concerning the love of Chriſt, the Blood of Chriſt, the Offices,

1 Joh. 2. 1. Pſal. 119: 49, 50. Old men love to ſpeak of ancient things.

Offices of Christ, the Merits of Christ, the Righteousnes of Christ, the Graces of Christ, and the Influence of Christ. O the stories that an Old Disciple can tell you, of the In-dwellings of the Spirit, of the Operations of the Spirit, of the Teachings of the Spirit, of the Leadings of the Spirit, of the Sealings of the Spirit, of the Witnessings of the Spirit, and of the Comforts and Joys of the Spirit! O the stories that an Old Christian can tell you, of the evil of Sin, the bitterness of Sin, the deceitfulness of Sin, the prevalency of Sin, and the happiness of the Conquest over Sin! O the stories that he can tell you, of the snares of Satan, the devices of Satan, the temptations of Satan, the rage of Satan, the malice of Satan, the watchfulness of Satan, and the ways of triumphing over Satan! As an Old Souldier can tell you of many Battels, many Scars, many Wounds, many Losses, and many Victories, even to admiration; So an Old Saint is able to tell you many

many divine ſtories even to admiration.

Pliny writes of the Crocodile, that ſhe grows to her laſt day: So aged Saints, they grow rich in Spiritual experience to the laſt. An Old Chriſtian being once asked, if he grew in goodneſs, anſwered, Yea, doubtleſs I do, for God hath ſaid, *The righteous ſhall flouriſh like the Palm-tree*; (now the Palm-tree never loſeth his leaf or fruit, ſaith *Pliny*) *he ſhall grow like a Cedar in Lebanon. Thoſe that be planted in the Houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of our God; they ſhall ſtill bring forth fruit in old age, they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing.*

Hoſ. 14. 5, 6, 7.

Pſal. 92. 12, 13, 14.

A fellow to this Promiſe *Iſaiah* mentions: *Hearken unto me, O houſe of Jacob, and all the remnant of the houſe of Iſrael, which are born by me from the Belly, which are carryed from the Womb, and even to your old age, I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and I will deliver you.*

Iſa. 46. 3 4.

There

Dan. 7. 9, 13, 22.

There is nothing more commendable in fulneſs of Age, than fulneſs of knowledge and experience, nor nothing more honourable than to ſee Ancient Chriſtians very much acquainted with the Ancient of days.

It is a brave ſight to ſee Ancient Chriſtians like the Almond-tree. Now the Almond-tree doth flouriſh and is full of bloſſoms in the Winter of old age; for as *Pliny* tells us, the Almond-tree doth bloſſom in the month of *January*. Experiments in Religion are beyond Notions and Expreſſions; a ſanctified heart is better than a ſilver tongue; no man ſo rich, ſo honourable, ſo happy as the Old Diſciple, that is rich in Spiritual Experiences, and yet there is no Chriſtian ſo rich in his experiences, but he would be richer.

The Lawyer.

As *Julianus* ſaid, that when he had one foot in the Grave, he would have the other in the School: So though an Old Diſciple hath one foot in the Grave, yet

yet he will have the other in Christs School, that he may still be treasuring up more and more Divine Experiments; and by this also you see, *What an honour it is to be an Old Disciple*, &c.

Particular V.

An old Disciple is very stout, couragious, firm and fixt in his resolution.

An old Christian is like a Pillar, a Rock, nothing can move him, nothing can shake him: What is suckt in in youth, will abide in old age; old Souldiers are stout and couragious, nothing can daunt nor discourage them. When *Joshua* was a hundred and ten years old, O how couragious and resolute was he! *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve; whether the Gods that your Fathers served, that were on the other side of the Flood, or the Gods of the Ammonites in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the*

Psal. 44. 9. *ult.*

Josh. 24. 15, 29.

the Lord. And it came to pass, after these things, that Joshua the Son of Nun, the Servant of the Lord died, being an hundred and ten years old.

Confidius, a Senator of *Rome*, told *Cæsar* boldly, that the Senators durst not come to Council for fear of his Souldiers; he replyed, Why then dost thou go to the Senate? he answered, Because my age takes away my fear.

Ah! none so courageous, none so divinely fearless, none so careless in evil days, as ancient Christians. An old Christian knows, that that good will do him no good, which is not made good by perseverance; his resolution is like that of *Gonsalvo*, who protested to his Souldiers, shewing them *Naples*, that he had rather die one foot forwards, than to have his life secured for long, by one foot of retreat. Shall such a man as I am flee, said undaunted *Nehemiah*? he will courageously venture life and limb, rather than by one foot of retreat,

Neh. 6. 11.

retreat, discredit his profession with the *reproach of fearfulness*. It was a brave magnanimous speech of *Luther*, when dangers from opposers did threaten him and his associates; Come (saith he) let us sing the forty sixth *Psalm*, and then let them do their worst.

When *Polycarpus* was fourscore and six years old, he suffered Martyrdom couragiously, resolutely, and undauntedly.

When one of the ancient Martyrs was very much threatned by his Persecutors, he replyed, There is nothing of things visible, nothing of things invisible that I fear. I will stand to my Profession of the Name of Christ, and contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, come on it what will.

Old Disciples, old Souldiers of Christ, they have the heart and courage of *Shammah*, one of *David's* Worthies who stood and defended the Field, when all the rest fled. The Hebrews call a young man *Nagnar*,

Aristotle (though a Heathen) could say, that in some cases a man had better lose his life, than be cowardly, *Arist. Ethic.* 3. c. 4.

1 Sam. 23. 11, 12.

Nagnar, which springs from a root that signifies to shake off, or to be tossed to and fro; to note how fickle, and how constant in unconstancy young men are; they usually are persons either of no resolution for good, or of weak resolution; they are too often won with a Nut, and lost with an Apple; but now aged Christians, in all Earth-quakes they stand fast, like *Mount Sion*, that cannot be removed. And by this also you may see what an honour it is to be an *Old Disciple*, an old Christian.

Mat. 19. 20, 21, 22.

Particular VI.

An old Disciple, an old Christian is prepared for Death, he hath been long a dying to Sin, to the World, to Friends, to Self, to Relations, to all, and no man so prepared to die, as he that thus daily dies.

Rom 6. 6. Gal. 5. 24. chap. 6. 14.

An Old Disciple hath lived sincerely to Christ, he hath lived eminently to Christ, he hath lived in all conditions, and under all changes to Christ, he hath lived exemplarily to Christ, he hath liv-

Rom. 14. 7, 8. Phil. 2. 21, 22, 23.

ed

ed long to Christ, and therefore the more prepared to die, and be with Christ. An Old Disciple hath a Crown in his eye, a Pardon in his bosom, and a Christ in his arms; and therefore may sweetly sing it out with old *Simeon*, *Lord, now let thy Servant depart in peace.* As *Hilarion* said to his Soul; Soul, thou hast served Christ this seventy years, and art thou afraid of Death? Go out Soul, go out.

Many a day, said old *Cowper*, have I sought Death with tears, not out of impatience, distrust or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful to fall into it. *Nazianzen* calls upon the King of Terrours, Devour me, devour me. And *Augustine*, when old, could say, Shall I die ever? yes; or shall I die at all? yes; why then Lord, if ever, why not now? why not now? So when *Modestus* the Emperours Lieutenant threatned to kill *Basil*, he answered, If that be all, I fear not; yea, your Master cannot more pleasure me, than

Zeno a wise Heathen said, I have no fear but of old age.

Cyprian could receive the cruellest sentence of death, with a *Deo gratias*, God I thank thee.

in sending me unto my Heavenly Father, to whom I now live, and whom I desire to hasten.

It was the saying of an Ancient Minister a little before his death, I cannot say, I have so lived, that I should now be afraid to die, but this I can say, I have so learned Christ, that I am not afraid to die. Old Christians have made it more to die, than to dine. It is nothing to die, when the Comforter stands by. Old Disciples know that to die, is but to lie down in their beds, they know that their dying day is better than their birth day; and this made Solomon to prefer his Coffin before his Crown, the day of his Dissolution before the day of his Coronation.

Isa. 57. 1, 2. Eccles. 7. 1.

The Ancients were wont to call the days of their death, *Natalia*, not dying days, but birth days.

The *Jews* to this day, stick not to call their *Golgothas*, *Bate Chaim*, the houses or places of the Living; Old Christians; that

that death is but an entrance into life; 'tis but a Pass over, a *Jubile*, 'tis but the Lords Gentleman-usher to conduct them to Heaven, and this prepares them to die, and makes death more desireable than life; and by this you may see *that it is an Honour to be an Old Disciple.*

Particular VII.

An Old Disciple, an Old Christian shall have a great reward in Heaven.

1 Cor. 15. all.
2 Cor. 9. 6. Mat. 5. 10, 11, 12.
God will reward his Servants *secundum laborem*, according to their labour, tho' not *secundum promeritum*, according to the fulness of their labour.

Old Christians have done much and suffered much for Christ; and the more any man doth or suffers for Christ here, the more glory he shall have hereafter. 'Twas the saying of an Old Disciple upon his dying bed, He is come, He is come (meaning the Lord) with a great Reward, for a little Work. *Agrippa* having suffered imprisonment for wishing *Cajus* Emperour, the first thing *Cajus* did, when he came to the Empire, was to prefer *Agrippa* to a Kingdom.

he gave him also a Chain of Gold as heavy as the Chain of Iron that was upon him in prison; and will not Christ richly reward all his suffering Saints? Surely he will. Christ will at last pay a Christian for every Prayer he hath made, for every Sermon he hath heard, for every tear he hath shed, for every morsel he hath given, for every burthen he hath born, for every battel he hath fought, for every enemy he hath slain, and for every temptation that he hath overcome.

Cyrus in a great Expedition against his enemies, the better to encourage his Souldiers to fight, in an Oration that he made at the head of his Army, promised upon the Victory, to make every Foot-Souldier a Horse-man, and every Horse-man a Commander, and that no Officer that did valiantly, should be unrewarded; but what are *Cyrus* his rewards, to the rewards that Christ our General promises to his? *Rev.* 3. 21. *To him*

Mat. 19. 28. Luk. 22. 30. Mat. 12. 5.

over-

overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne. As there is no Lord to Christ, so there are no rewards to Christ's; his rewards are the greatest rewards; he gives Kingdoms, Crowns, Thrones; he gives Grace and Glory, *Psalm* 84. 11.

As the King in *Plutarch* said of a Groat, it is no Kingly Gift, and of a Talent, it is no base Bribe.

It is said of *Araunah*, that noble *Jebusite*, renowned for his bounty, that he had but a Subjects Purse, yet a Kings Heart; but Jesus Christ hath a Kings Purse, as well as a Kings Heart, and accordingly he gives.

And as Christs rewards are the greatest rewards, so his rewards are the surest rewards; *he is faithful that hath promised*, 1 *Thes.* 5. 24. *Antiochus* promised often, but seldom gave (upon which he was called in a way of derision, a great promiser) but Jesus Christ never made any promise, but he hath or will perform it, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. nay, he is often better than his word.

1 *Cor.* 2. 9. He gives many times more than we ask. The man sick of the Palsie, asked but health, and Christ gave him health, and a pardon to boot. *Solomon* desired but Wisdom, and the Lord gave him Wisdom, and Honour, and Riches and the favour of Creatures, Peace and Pick-thred into the bargain. *Jacob* asked him but cloaths to wear, and bread to eat, and the Lord gave him these things and riches and other mercies into the bargain.

Mat. 9. 2.

2 Chron. 1. 10, to 16.

Gen. 28. 20. compared with Gen. 32. 10.

Christ doth not measure his gifts by our Petitions, but by his own Riches and Mercy. Gracious Souls many times receive many gifts and favours from God that they never dream't of, nor durst presume to ask, which others extreamly strive after, and go without.

Archelaus being much importuned by a covetous Courtier for a Cup of Gold wherein he drank, gave it unto *Euripides*, that stopt by saying, Thou art worthy

ask and be denied, but *Euripides* is worthy of gifts, although he ask not.

The Prodigal craves no more but the place of a hired Servant, but he is entertained as a Son, he is clad with the best Robe, and fed with the fatted Calf; he hath a Ring for his hand, and Shoes for his feet, rich supplies, more than he desired. *Jacobs* Sons in a time of Famine, desired only Corn, and they return with Corn and Money in their Sacks, and with good news too, *Joseph is alive, and Governour of all Ægypt.* Luk. 15. 19, 25. Gen. 42.

And as his rewards are greater and surer than other rewards, so they are more durable and lasting than other rewards; the Kingdom that he gives, is a Kingdom that shakes not; the treasures that he gives, are treasures that corrupt not, and the glory that he gives, is glory that fadeth not away; but the rewards that men give, are like themselves fickle and unconstant, they are withering and fading. Heb. 12. 28. Mat. 6. 19 20. 1 Pet. 1. 4.

Xerxes Crowned his Steer-man in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day.

And *Andronicus* the Greek Emperor Crowned his Admiral in the morning, and then took off his head in the afternoon.

Roffensis had a Cardinals Hat sent him, but his Head was cut off before it came to him. Most may say of their Crowns, as that King said of his, O Crown! more noble than happy. It was a just complaint which long ago was made against the Heathen Gods, (*O facilis dare summa deos eademque tueri difficiles!*) they could give their Favourites great Gifts, but they could not maintain them in the possession of them; the World may give you great things, but the World cannot maintain you in the possession of them; but the great things, the great rewards that Christ gives his, he will for ever maintain them in the possession of them, otherwise

Heaven

Heaven would not be Heaven, Glory would not be Glory: Now by all these things you see, that it is a very great honour to be an Old Disciple, an Old Christian; and this honour you will never attain to, except you begin to be really good betimes, except in the morning of your Youth, you return to the Lord, and get an interest in him.

I shall now come to make some use and Application of this weighty Truth to our selves.

You see Beloved, that it is the great Duty and Concernment of Young Men, *To be really good betimes*; If this be so; Then

Use I.

First; This Truth looks sourly and sadly upon such Young Men; that are only seemingly good, that make some shews of goodness, but are not right to-

ward God as Root.

2 Chron. 24. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, 25, 16.

As *Joash* when he was young, he seemed to have good things in him towards the Lord, whilst good *Jehoiada* lived, but when *Jehoiada* was dead, *Joash* his goodness was buried with him.

Nero's first five years are famous, but afterwards who more cruel?

Ah, how many in these days that have been seemingly good, have turned to be naught, very naught, yea stark naught?

It is said of *Tiberius*, that whilst *Augustus* ruled, he was no ways tainted in his reputation; and that whilst *Drusus* and *Germanicus* were alive, he feigned those vertues which he had not, to maintain a good opinion of himself in the hearts of the people; but after he had got himself out of the reach of contradiction and controulment, there was no fact in which he was not faulty, no crime to which he was not accessary.

There are some that write, that after *Demas* had forsaken *Paul*, he became a Priest in an Idol Temple.

Oh! That this were not applicable to many young persons in these

these days, who have made great shew, and taken upon them a great name, who have begun to out shine the Stars, but are now gone out like so many snuffs, to the dishonour of God, the reproach of the Gospel, the grief of others, and the hazard of their own Souls.

It was a custom of old, when any were baptized, the Minister delivered a white Garment to be put on, saying: Take thou this white Vestment, and see thou bring it forth without spot, at the Judgement seat of Jesus Christ; whereupon one *Maritta* Baptizing one *Elpidophorus*, who when he was grown up, proved a prophane wretch, he brings forth the white garment, and holding it up, shakes it against him, saying: This Linnen garment, *Elpidophorus*, shall accuse thee at the coming of Christ, which I have kept by me as a witness of thy Apostacy.

All Young Men and Women, your former professions will be a sad witness against you in the great

Crabs that go backward, are reckoned among the unclean creatures, *Lev.* 11.10.

great day of our Lord Jesus, except you repent and return in good earnest to the Lord.

Oh it had been better that you had never made profession, that you had never set your faces towards Heaven, that you had never pretended to God and Christ, that you had never known the way of Righteousness, than after you have known it to turn from the holy Commandment!

Prov. 14. 14

2 Pet. 1. 21.

Cyprian in his Sermon *de Lapsis*, reporteth of divers, who forsaking the Faith, were given over to evil spirits, and died fearfully.

Oh the delusions, and the Christ-dethroning, Conscience-wasting, and Soul-undoing Opinions, and Principles, the many young ones, (who once were hopeful ones) are given up to! That dreadful Scripture seems to be made good in power upon them: *All you that forsake the Lord, shall come to be ashamed, and they that depart from him, shall be written upon the dust.* To begin well, and not to proceed, is

Jer. 17. 13.

but

but to aspire to a higher pitch, that the fall may be the more desperate. Backsliding is a wounding sin. You read of no arms for the back, though you do for the breast. He that is but seemingly good, will prove at last exceedingly bad, 2 *Tim.* 3. 13. *They wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.* Hos. 4. 14. Eph. 6. 11, 18.

The Wolf, though he often dissembles, and closely hides his Nature, yet he will one time or other shew himself to be a Wolf.

In the days of *Hadrian* the Emperour, there was one *Bencasby*, who gathering a multitude of *Jews* together, called himself *Ben cocuba*, the Son of a Star, applying that Prophecy to himself, *Numb.* 24. 17. but his Mask was taken off, his Hypocrisie discovered, and he found to be *Barchosaba*, the Son of a Lye; this Age hath afforded many such Monsters, but their folly is discovered, and their practices abhorred. This was the young Man's commendation in the Text, *That there* Comets make a greater blaze than fixed Stars.

there was found in him some real good towards the Lord.

Use II.

Secondly, This Truth looks sourly and sadly upon such young Men, who are so far from having good things in them towards the Lord, that they give themselves up to those youthful lusts and vanities, that are dishonouring, provoking and displeasing to the Lord, who roar and revel, and gad, and game and dice, and drink and drab, and what not: these make work with a witness, for Repentance, or Hell, or the Physician of Souls.

I shall but touch upon the evil of Youth, and then come to that which is most intended.

CHAP. III.

The first evil that most properly attends Youth, is Pride.

1 Tim. 3. 6. PRide of Heart, Pride of Apparel, Pride of Parts; young men are apt

apt to be proud of health, ſtrength, friends, relations, wit, wealth, wiſdom: two things are very rare, the one is to ſee a Young Man humble and watchful, and the other to ſee an Old Man contented and chearful.

Bernard ſaith, that pride is the rich mans Couſin, and experience every day ſpeaks out pride to be the Young Mans Couſin. God (ſaid one) had three Sons, *Lucifer*, *Adam*, and *Chriſt*; the firſt aſpired to be like God in Power, and was therefore thrown down from Heaven: The ſecond to be like him in knowledge, and was therefore deſervedly driven out of *Eden*, when young: the third did altogether imitate and follow him in his goodneſs, mercy and humility, and by ſo doing obtained an everlaſting inheritance.

Pride cannot climb ſo high, but Juſtice will ſit above.

Remember this young men, and as you would get a Paradiſe, and keep a Paradiſe, get humble, and keep humble. Pride is an evil that puts men upon all manner of evil.

cula *Accius* the Poet, though he were a Dwarf, yet would be pictured tall of stature.

Pſaphon, a proud *Lybian*, would needs be a God, and having caught some Birds, he taught them to ſpeak and prattle, The great God *Pſaphon*.

Menecrates, a proud Phyſician wrote thus to King *Philip*, *Menecrates* a God, to *Philip* a King.

Proud *Simon* in *Lucian*, having got a little wealth, changed his name (from *Simon* to *Simonides*) for that there were ſo many Beggars of his Kin, and ſet the houſe on fire wherein he was born, becauſe no body ſhould point at it.

What ſad evils *Abimelech*'s Pride, and *Haman*'s Pride, and *Herod*'s Pride, and *Belſhazzar*'s Pride put them upon, I ſhall not now mention.

Ah Young Men! Young Men! had others a window to look into your breaſts, or did your hearts ſtand where your faces do, you would even be afraid of your ſelves.

An old Woman ſeeing her deformity in a glaſs, went mad, &c.

selves, you would loath and abhor your selves.

Ah Young Men! Young Men! as you would have God to keep house with you, as you would have his mind and secrets made known to you, as you would have Christ to delight in you, and the Spirit to dwell in you, as you would be honoured among Saints, attended and guarded by Angels, get humble and keep humble.

Tertullian's counsel to the young Gallants of those times was excellent; Cloath your selves (said he) with the Silk of Piety, with the Sattin of Sanctity, and with the Purple of Modesty; So shall you have God himself to be your Suitor. *Tert. de Cult. fœm. cap. 13.*

2 Evil.

The second Evil that Youth is subject to, is sensual pleasures and delights. Rejoyce O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes. Eccl. 11. 9. 2 Sam. 13. 22,—29. ἡδονὴ δέλεαρκακῶν. Pleasure is the habit of sin, saith *Plato.*

The Wise man by an Ironical concession,

cession, bids him *Rejoyce, &c.* Sin *&c.* Thou art wilful, and resolved upon taking thy pleasure, go on, take thy course; this he speaks by way of mockage and bitter scoff. *&c. but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment.* So *Samson* made a feast, for so used the young men to do; the hearts of young men usually are much given up to pleasure. I have read of a young man, who was very much given up to pleasures, he standing by St. *Ambrose*, and seeing his excellent death, turned to other young men by him and said, Oh! that I might live with you, and die with him. Sensual pleasures are like to those Locusts, *Rev.* 9. 7. the Crowns upon whose heads are said to be only as it were such, or such in appearance, and like Gold, but *vers.* 10. it is said there were (not as it were, but) *stings in their Tails.*

Jud. 14. 10.

They were much out that held pleasure to be man's chiefest good.

Sensual pleasures are but seeming and appearing pleasures, but the pains that attend them are true

true and real; he that delights in ſenſual pleaſures, ſhall find his greateſt pleaſures become his bitterſt pains.

The Heathens looked upon the back parts of Pleaſure, and ſaw it going away from them, and leaving a ſting behind.

Pleaſures paſs away as ſoon as they have wearied out the body, and leave it as a bunch of Grapes, whoſe juice hath been preſſed out; which made one to ſay (*Nulla major voluptas quam voluptatis faſtidium,*) I ſee no greater pleaſure in this World, than the contempt of pleaſure.

Julian, though an Apoſtate, yet profeſſed, That the pleaſures of the body were far below a great ſpirit. And *Tully* ſaith, He is not worthy of the name of a man (*qui unum diem velit eſſe in voluptate,*) that would entirely ſpend one whole day in pleaſures: it is better not to deſire pleaſures, than to enjoy them. *I ſaid of Laughter, It is mad, and of Mirth, What doſt*

Eccleſ. 2.

doſt thou? The interrogation bids a Challenge to all the Maſters of Mirth, to produce any ſatisfactory fruit which it affordeth, if they could.

Xerxes being weary of all pleaſures, promiſed rewards to the Inventers of new pleaſures, which being invented, he nevertheleſs remained unſatisfied. As a Bee flieth from flower to flower, and is not ſatisfied, and as a ſick man removes from one Bed to another, from one Seat to another, from one Chamber to another for eaſe, and finds none: So Men given up to ſenſual pleaſures, go from one pleaſure to another, but can find no content, no ſatisfaction in their pleaſures. *The Eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the Ear filled with hearing.* Eccleſ. 1. 8. There is a Curſe of unſatisfiableneſs lies upon the Creature; honours cannot ſatisfie the ambitious man, nor riches the covetous man, nor pleaſures the voluptuous man; man cannot take off the wearineſs of one pleaſure, by

by another, for after a few avaporated minutes are spent in pleasures, the body presently fails, the mind, and the mind the desire, and the desire the satisfaction, and all the man.

Pleasures are *Nuno's* in the pursuit, and but Clouds in the enjoyment; Pleasure is a beautiful Harlot, sitting in her Chariot, whose four Wheels are Pride, Gluttony, Lust and Idleness; the two Horses are Prosperity and Abundance; the two Drivers are Idleness and Security; her Attendants and Followers are Guilt, Grief, late Repentance (if any) and oft Death and Ruine; many great men, and many strong men, and many rich men, and many hopeful men, and many young men have come to their ends by her, but never any enjoyed full satisfaction and content in her.

Ah Young Men, Young Men avoid this Harlot, and come not near the door of her house. And for lawful pleasures, let me only say this, 'tis your wisdom only

Bernus saith that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is sweet, but in the end it breeds *Choler*, so do worldly pleasures.

only to touch them, to taste them, and to use them, as *Mithridate* used poyson; to fortifie your selves against casual extremities and malignes. When Mr. *Roger Asthan* asked the Lady *Jane Gray*, how she could lose such pastime, her Father with the Dutchess being a Hunting in the Park; smilingly answered, All sport in the Park is but a shadow of that pleasure I find in this Book, having a good Book in her hand.

Augustine before his conversion, could not tell how to live without those pleasures which he delighted much in, but when his nature was changed, and his heart graciously turned to the Lord, O how sweet (saith he) is it to be without those former sweet delights.

Ah! Young Men when once you come to experience the goodness and sweetness that is in the Lord, and in his Word and Ways, you will then sit down and grieve, that you have spent more Wine in the Cup, than Oyl in the Lamp.

There

There are no pleasures so delighting, so satisfying, so ravishing, so engaging, and so abiding, as those that spring from union, and communion with God; as those that flow from a sense of Interest in God, and from an humble, and a holy walking with God.

3. Evil.

The Third Sin of Youth is Rashness.

They many times know little, and fear less, and so are apt rashly to run on and run out often to their hurt, but more often to their hazard. *Exhort Young Men to be sober minded, and discreet.* They are apt to be rash, to be hot-spurs: as you may see in *Rehoboam's* Young Counsellors, who counselled him to tell the people (that groaned under their burden) that his little finger should be thicker than his Fathers loins, and that he would add to their yoak, and that whose-

Arist. Polit.

Tit. 2. 6.

1 King. 12. 8, 9, 10, 11.

whereas his Father had chastised them with Whips, he would chastise them with Scorpions; this rash Counsel proved *Rehoboam's* Ruin: Yea *David* himself, though a good man, yet being in his warm blood and young, how sadly was he overtaken with rashness? *As the Lord God of* Israel *liveth* (saith he) *except thou hadst hastened, and come to meet me, surely, there had not been left unto* Nabal, *by the morning light, any that pisseth against the Wall.* And this he binds with an Oath; because the Master was foolishly wilful, the innocent Servant must all be woful, and because *Nabal* had been niggardly of his Bread *David* would be prodigal of his Blood.

1 Sam. 25. 34, 35. *Dius proximus ille est, quem ratio non ira movet.* Sen. He is next to God whom reason, not anger moveth.

Ah! how unlike a Christian, yea how below a Man, doth *David* carry it, when his Blood is up, and he a Captive to Rashness and Passion? Rashness will admit of nought for Reason, but what unreasonable Self shall dictate for Reason; as Sloth sel-

dom

dom bringeth actions to good birth, ſo raſhneſs makes them always abortive, e're well formed: A raſh Spirit is an ungod-like Spirit: a raſh Spirit is a weak Spirit, it is an effeminate Spirit. *A man of underſtanding is of an excellent Spirit*; or as the Hebrew will bear it, is of a *cool* Spirit, not raſh and hot, ready at every turn to put out his ſoul in Wrath. Raſhneſs unmans a man, it will put a man upon things below manhood. *Heroſtratus* (a hot-ſpur) an obſcure baſe fellow, did in one night by fire deſtroy the Temple of *Diana* at *Epheſus* which was two hundred and twenty years in building of all *Aſia*, at the coſt of ſo many Princes, and beautified with the labour and cunning of ſo many excellent workmen. The truth is, there would be no end, ſhould I diſcover the many ſad and great evils that are uſhered into the World by that one evil *Raſhneſs*, which uſually attends youth, *&c.* And therefore young men, decline it, and arm your ſelves againſt it, *&c.* Prov. 17. 27.

4 Evil.

The fourth sin that ordinarily attends on Youth, is mocking and scoffing at Religious men, and Religious things.

They were young ones, that scoffingly and scornfully said to the Prophet, *Go up thou bald-head, go up thou bald-head.* And the young men derided and mocked *Job.* But now, *they that are younger than I have me in derision; whose Fathers I would have disdained to have set with the Dogs of my Flock. Upon my right hand rise the Youth, they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction,* &c. And oh that this Age did not afford many such Monsters who are notable, who are infamous in this black Art of scoffing and deriding the People of God, and the ways of God.

1 Kings 2. 23, 24. Job 30. 1. 12, 13, 14, 15.

The *Athenians* once scoffed at *Scilla's* Wife, and it had well-nigh cost the razing of their City,

was so provoked with the indignity; and will you think it safe to scoff at the People of God, who are the Spouse of Christ, who are as the Apple of the Eye, who are the Signet of his Right-hand, his Portion, his pleasant Portion, his Inheritance, his Jewel, his Royal Diadem? Ah Young men, Young men! will you seriously consider how sadly and sorely he hath punished other Scoffers and Mockers? and by his Judgments on them, be warned never to scoff at the People of God, or his ways more. *Julian* the Emperor was a great scoffer of Christians, but at last he was struck with an Arrow from Heaven, that made him cry out, (*Vicisti Galilæe,*) Thou *Galilean* (meaning our Saviour Christ) hast overcome me. *Felix*, for one malicious scoff, did nothing day and night but vomit Blood, till his unhappy Soul was separated from his wretched Body. *Pherecydes* was consumed by Worms alive, for giving

Zech. 2. 1. Chap. 5. Deut. 32. 9 Isa 19. 25 Joel 2. 15 Psal. 13. 12 Isa. 26. 3.

Religion but a Nick-name. *Lucian* for barking against Religion like a Dog, was by the just Judgment of God devoured by Dogs. Remember these dreadful Judgments of God on scoffers, and if you like them, then mock on, scoff on, but know, that Justice will at last be even with you, nay above you.

5 Evil.

The fifth and last evil (that I shall mention) *that attends and waits on youth, is lustfulness and wantonness.*

2 Tim. 2. 12. Which occasioned aged *Paul* to caution his young *Timothy* to flee youthful lusts. *Timothy* was a chast and chastened piece; he was much *sanctified* and *mortified*, his *Graces* were high, and *Corruptions* low; he walked up and down this World with dying thoughts, and with a weak, distempered, declining dying Body; his heart was in Heaven, and his foot in the Grave, and yet Youth is such a slippery age, that *Paul* commands him to flee,

flee, to post from youthful lusts; though *Timothy* was a good man, a weak sickly man, a marvellous temperate man, drinking water rather than Wine; yet he was but a man, yea, a young man; and therefore *Paul's* Counsel and Command is, that he flee youthful lusts.

And *Solomon* who had sadly experienced the slipperiness of youth, gives this Counsel, *Put away the evil of thy flesh, for Childhood and Youth are vanity.* Eccl. 11. 10. He was a young man that followed the Harlot to her House; he was young in years, and young in knowledge; *Salazer* upon the words, saith, That was a happy age that afforded but one simple young man among many, whereas late times afford greater store; Ah! too many of the youths of this age, instead of flying from youthful lusts, they post and pursue after youthful lusts. Prov. 7. 7, 8, 9. &c.

Chrysostome speaking of youth, saith, it is (*difficilem, jactabilem, fallibilem, vehementissimisque egentem freni,*) hard to be ruled, easie to Chrysost. *Homil.* 1. *Ad Populum.*

be drawn away, apt to be deceived, and ſtanding in need of very violent reins.

Lipsius. The Antients did picture Youth like a young man naked, with a veil over his face, his right hand bound behind him, his left hand looſe, and Time behind him pulling one thread out of his veil every day; ſo intimating, that young men are void of knowledge, and blind, unfit to do good, ready to do evil, till Time by little and little makes them wiſer. Well, young man, remember this, that the leaſt ſparkling and kindling of Luſts, will firſt or laſt coſt thee groans and griefs, tears and terrors enough. Theſe five are the ſins that uſually are waiting and attending on Youth, but from theſe the young man in the Text was by Grace preſerved and ſecured, which is more than I dare affirm of all into whoſe hands this Treatiſe ſhall fall. But though theſe five are the ſins of Youth, yet they are not all the ſins of Youth, for

Youth

Youth is capable of, and subject to all other sins whatsoever, but these are the special sins that most usually wait and attend on young men when they are in the spring and morning of their Youth.

Other sins attend youth, as
1. Ignorance, 1 *Cor.* 14. 20.
2. Falsehood, *Psal.* 50. 3.
3. Excessive love of Liberty.
4. Impatience of counsels and reproof, *Jer.* 31.18, 19.
5. Imprudence, *Isa.* 3. 5.
6. A trifling Spirit, *Eccl.* 11.10.
7. Prodigality.

CHAP. IV.

I Shall now hasten to the main Use that I do intend to stand upon, and that is an Use of Exhortation to all Young persons.

Use.

Ah Sirs! as you tender the glory of God, the good of your Bodies, the joy of your Christian Friends, and the Salvation of your own Souls, be exhorted and perswaded to be really good betimes. It was the praise and honour of *Abijah*, that there was found in him some good thing towards the Lord in the Primrose of his Childhood.

Oh that it might be your honour and happiness to be really good betimes, that it might be to you a Praise, and a Name, that in the

morning of your Youth, you have begun to seek the Lord, and to know and love the Lord, and to get an interest and propriety in the Lord: Now that this Exhortation may stick and take,

I beseech you seriously to weigh and ponder these following Motives or Considerations.

1 Motive.

First, Consider, *It is an honour to be good betimes.* A young Saint is like the morning Star; he is like a Pearl in a Gold Ring. It is mentioned as a singular honour to the believing *Jews*, Eph. 1. 12. that they first trusted in Christ; *that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ*; this was their praise, their crown, that they were first converted and turned to Christ and Christianity. Rom. 16,7. So St. *Paul* mentioning *Andronicus* and *Junia*, doth not omit this circumstance of praise and honour that they were in Christ before him. *Salute Andronicus and Junia, my Kinsmen and Fellow-Prisoners,*

ners, who are of note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

And so it was the honour of the house of *Stephanus*, that they were the *first fruits of Achaia*; it was their glory that they were the first that received, and *welcomed* the *Gospel* in *Achaia*. 'Tis a *greater honour* for a young man to *outwrestle* Sin, Satan, Temptation, the World and Lust, than ever *Alexander the Great* could attain unto. It was *Judah*'s praise and honour, that they were the *first in fetching home* David *their King*.

1 Cor. 16. 15.

1 Sam. 19. 15.

Ah! Young Men and Women, it will be your *eternal praise* and *honour*, if you shall be *before others*; if you shall be the *first among many*, who shall know the Lord, and seek the Lord, who shall receive the Lord, and embrace him, who shall cleave to the Lord, and serve him; who shall honour the Lord, and obey him; who shall delight in the Lord, and walk with him. The *Romans* built

Virtues and Honours Temple close together, to shew that the way to Honour was by Virtue, and indeed there is no Crown to that which goodness sets upon a man's Head; all other Honour is fading and withering. *Adonibezek*, a mighty Prince, is suddenly made Fellow-commoner with the Dogs. And *Nebuchadnezzar*, a mighty Conquerour, turned a grazing among the Oxen. And *Herod* reduced from a conceited God, to be the most loathsom of men, living Carrion, arrested by the vilest of Creatures upon the suit of his affronted Creator. And *Haman* feasted with the King one day, and made a feast for Crows the next. I might tell you of *Bajazet* and *Belisarius*, two of the greatest Commanders in the World, and many others, who have suddenly fallen from the top of worldly honour and felicity, into the greatest contempt and misery; but I shall not at this time; but that Honour that rises from mens being

Judg. 1. 7.

Dan. 4. 28.

Act. 12. 23.

Est. 7. 10.

being *gracious betimes*, is such honour that the World can neither *give* nor *take*; it is honour, it is a Crown that will still be green and *flourishing*; it is honour that will *bed and board with a man*, that will abide with a man under all *trials* and *changes*, that will to the *Grave*, that will to *Heaven* with a Man.

Ah Sirs! It is no small honour to you who are in the spring and *morning of your days*, that the Lord hath left upon record several instances of his love and delight *in young men*; he chose *David*, a *younger Brother*, and passes by his *elder Brothers*: He frowns upon *Esau*, and *passes by* his door, and sets his *love and delight* upon *Jacob* the *younger Brother*; he kindly and lovingly accepts of *Abel's Person* and *Sacrifice*, and rejects both *Cain's Person* and *Sacrifice*, though he was the *elder Brother*. Among all the Disciples *John* was the *youngest*, and the *most* and *best beloved*. There was

1 Sam. 16. 11, 12, 13. Rom. 9. 12, 13.

Gen. 4. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Joh. 13. 23.

Mar. 10. 19, 20, 21.

was but *one young man* that came to *Christ*, and he *came not aright*; and all the good that was in him, was but some *moral good*, and yet Christ loved him with a love of *pity* and *compassion*; the Greek word signifies to *speak friendly*, and *deal gently with one*; and so did Christ with him, all which should exceedingly encourage young men to be good betimes, to be gracious in the morning of their youth; no way to true honour like this; But,

ἀγαπᾶν.

2 Motive.

The Sacrifices in the Law were young Lambs, and young Kids, to shew that Christ our Sacrifice, should die and suffer for our sins in the flower of his age.

Secondly, Consider, *Christ loved poor Sinners, and gave himself for them, when he was in the prime of his age*; (being supposed to be about thirty and three) *and will you put him off with the worst of your time?*

Ah! Young men, young men, Christ gave himself up to Death, he made himself an Offering for your sins, for your sakes, when he was in the prime and flower of his age, and why then should you put off

Christ

Christ to old age? Did he die for Sin in the prime of his Age? and will not you die to sin in the prime of your Age? Did he offer himself for you in the spring and morning of his years? And will not you offer up your selves to him in the spring and morning of your years? O give not Christ cause to say, I died for you betimes, but you have not lived to me betimes; I was early in my sufferings for you, but you have not been early in your returning to me; I made haste to compleat your Redemption, but you have made no haste to make sure your Vocation and Election; I stayed not, I lingred not, but soon suffered what I was to suffer, and quickly did what was to be done for your eternal Welfare, but you have stayed and lingred (like *Lot* in *Sodom*) and have not done what you might have done in order to your everlasting good; in the Primrose of my days, I sweat for you,

Rom. 12. 1, 2.

2 Pet. 1. 10.

Gen. 19. 16.

you, I wept for you, I bled for you, I hung upon the Cross for you, I bore the wrath of my Father for you; but you have not in the Primrose of your days, swear under the sense of divine displeasure, or wept over your sins, nor mourned over me whom you have so often grieved and pierced; I could not be quiet nor satisfied till I had put you into a capacity, into a possibility of Salvation, and yet you are well enough quieted and satisfied, though you do not know whether ever you shall be saved.

Zech. 12. 10.

Ah Sirs! how sad would it be with you, if Jesus Christ should secretly thus expostulate with your Conscience in this your day!

Oh! how terrible would it be with you, if Christ should thus visibly plead against you in his great day! Ah! Young men, young men and women, who but Souls much left of God, blinded by Satan, and hardened in sin, can hear Jesus Christs speaking

2 Cor. 4. 3, 4

ing thus to them? I suffered for Sinners betimes, I laid down a ransom for Souls betimes, I pacified my Fathers Wrath betimes, I satisfied my Fathers Justice betimes, I merited Grace and Mercy for Sinners betimes, I brought in an everlasting Righteousnes upon the World betimes, &c. I say, who can hear Jesus Christ speaking thus, and his Heart not fall in love and league with Christ, and his Soul not unite to Christ, and resign to Christ, and cleave to Christ, and for ever be one with Christ, except it be such that are for ever left by Christ? Well, remember this, (*Quanto pro nobis vilior, tanto nobis charior,*) The more vile Christ made himself for us, the more dear he ought to be unto us.

Ah! Young men, remember this, when Christ was young, he was tempted and tryed, when he was in the morning of his days, his wounds were deep, his burden weighty, his cup bitter his sweat pain-

painful, his Agony, and Torment above conception, beyond expreſſion; when he was young, that bleſſed head of his was crowned with Thorns, and thoſe eyes of his that were purer than the Sun, were put out by the darkneſs of Death; and thoſe ears of his which now hear nothing but *Hallelujah's* of Saints and Angels, were filled with the Blaſphemies of the multitude; and that bleſſed beautiful face of his, which was *fairer than the Sons of men*, was ſpit on by beaſtly, filthy wretches; and that gracious mouth and tongue that *ſpake as never man ſpake*, was ſlandred, and accuſed of blaſphemy; and thoſe hands of his which *healed the ſick*, which *gave out pardons*, which *ſwayed the Scepter* in Heaven, and another on Earth, were nailed to the Croſs; and thoſe feet that were *beautiful upon the Mountains*, that brought the *glad tydings of Peace and Salvation* into the World, and that were like unto

Nolo vivere ſine vulnere cum te video vulneratum, Bonaventure. O my God, as long as I ſee thy wounds, I will never live without wounds. *Aut Deus naturæ patitur, aut mundi machinad iſolvitur*, ſaid *Dionyſius, Alexandrinus*; Either the God of nature ſuffereth, or the frame of the World will be diſſolved.

fine

fine brass, were also nailed to the Cross: All these *great* and *sad things* did Jesus Christ suffer for you in the prime and flower of his days; and Oh! what an unspeakable Provocation should this be to all young ones to give up themselves betimes to Christ, to serve, love, honour, and obey him betimes, even in the *spring* and *morning of their Youth*?

Let the thoughts of a *Crucified Christ*, (said one) be never out of your *mind*; let them be *meat* and *drink* unto you, let them be your *sweetness* and *consolation*, your *honey* and your *desire*, your *reading* and your *meditation*, your *life*, *death* and *resurrection*.

3. Motive.

The third Motive or Consideration to provoke you to begin to be good betimes, is this, *viz.*

That it is the best and choicest way in the world to be rich in gracious Experiences betimes (which are

The Philosopher once said, *solus sapiens dives*, only the wise man is the rich man.

are the best Riches in all the World;) as he that sets up for himself betimes, is in the most hopeful way to be rich betimes; so he that is good in good earnest betimes he is in the ready way, the high way of being rich in Grace, and rich in goodness, they usually prove men of great observation and great experience. God loves to shew these his beauty, and his glory in his Sanctuary. He delights to cause his glory and his goodness to pass before such: These shall find all his paths drop marrow and fatness; for these the Lord of Hosts will make *a feast of fat things, a feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat things full of marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refined*: These shall have all manner of pleasant fruits laid up at their Gates for their well beloved; none have so many choice pledges of Christs love, nor so many sweet kisses of Christs mouth, nor so many embraces in Christs arms, as those Souls that are good betimes:

Psal. 63. 1, 2.
Exod. 3. 3. 19, 22, &c.
Psal. 65. 11, 12.
Isa. 25. 6.
Cant. 7. 13.

betimes: O the Grace, the goodneſs, the ſweetneſs, the fatneſs, that Chriſt is ſtill a dropping into their Hearts! Chriſt will make their Hearts his largeſt Treaſury; he'll lay up moſt of his heavenly treaſure in their Souls; there he will ſtore up mercies new and old, there he will treaſure up all plenty, rarity and variety; there he will lay up all that Heart can wiſh, or need require: O the many drops of Myrrh, that fall from Chriſts fingers upon their hearts! O the many ſecrets that Chriſt reveals in their ears! O the many Love-letters that Chriſt ſends to theſe! O the many viſits that he gives to theſe! O the turns, the walks that he hath in Paradiſe with theſe! there are none in the World for experience and intelligence to theſe. Ah! Young men, young men, as you would be rich in the beſt riches, begin to be good betimes; as there is no riches to ſpiritual riches, ſo there is no way

Earthly riches are full of poverty. *Divitiæ corporalis paupertatis plenæ ſunt.*

way to be rich in these riches, but by beginning to be good (in good earnest) betimes.

If there were any happiness in Riches, the Gods, would not want them saith *Seneca*.

As for worldly riches, Philosophers have contemned them, and preferred a contemplative life above them, and shall not Christians much more? The Prophet calls them *thick clay*, which will sooner break the back, than lighten the heart; they cannot better the Soul, they cannot enrich the Soul. Ah! how many thredbare Souls are to be found under silken Cloaks and Gowns? How often are worldly riches like Hangmen, they hide mens faces with a covering, that they may not see their own end, and then they hang them. And if they do not hang you, they will shortly leave you, they make themselves wings, and flie away. When one was a commending the Riches and Wealth of Merchants; I do not love that Wealth, saith a Heathen, that hangs upon Ropes, if they break, the Ship miscarrieth,

and

and all is lost. *He is rich enough* (saith St. *Jerome*) *that lacketh not bread, and high enough in dignity, that is not forced to serve.*

This World's Wealth that men so much desire,
May well be liken'd to a burning fire,
Whereof a little can do little harm,
But profit much: our Bodies well to warm,
But take too much, and surely thou shalt burn;
So, too much Wealth, to too much woe doth turn.

It was an excellent saying of *Lewes* of *Bavyer*, Emperor of *Germany*; (*Hujusmodi corporanda sunt opes quæ cum naufragio simul enatent*;) such goods are worth getting and owning, as will not *sink*, or *wash away*, if a *Shipwrack* happen, but will *wade* and *swim* out with us: We see such are the *spiritual riches* that will attend those who in the spring and *morning of their youth*, shall know the Lord, and serve the Lord, and get an interest in the Lord. And thus much for the third Motive.

The

4 Motive.

The fourth Motive to provoke young ones to be really good betimes, is to consider, That *the present time, the present day is the only season that you are sure of.*

Heb. 3, 15.

Time past cannot be recalled, and time to come cannot be ascertained. *To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your Hearts. Behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of Salvation.* Some there be that trifle away their time, and fool away their Souls and their Salvation; to prevent this the Apostle beats upon the Τὸ νῦν, the present opportunity, because, if that be once past, there is no recovering of it; therefore as the Mariner takes the first fair winds to sail, and as the Merchant takes his first opportunity of buying and selling; and as the Husbandman takes the first opportunity of sowing and reaping; so should young men take the present season, the present day (which is their day) to be good towards

2 Cor. 6 2. The whole Earth hangs on a point, so doth Heaven and Eternity on an inch of opportunity.

wards the Lord, to seek him, and serve him, and not to post off the present season, for they know not what another day, another hour, another moment may bring forth: That Door of grace that is open to day, may be shut to morrow; that Golden Scepter of Mercy that is held forth in the Gospel this day, may be taken in the next day; that love that this hour is upon the bare knee, intreating and beseeching young men to break off their Sins by Repentance, to return to the Lord, to lay hold on his strength, and be at peace with him, may the next hour be turned into wrath. Isa. 27. 4, 5.

Ah! the noble motions that have been lost, the good purposes that have withered, the immortal Souls that have miscarried, by putting off the present season, the present day. St. *Paul* discoursing before *Felix* of Righteousness, and Temperance, and Judgment to come, and in this discourse striking at two special Act. 24. 25.

vices

vices that *Felix* was particularly guilty of, he *falls a trembling*; and being upon the Rack to hear such Doctrine, he bids St. *Paul* depart for that time, and he would call for him at a convenient season; here *Felix* neglects his present season, and we never read that ever after this he found a convenient time or season to hear St. *Paul* make an end of the subject he had begun: So Christ made a very fair offer to the Young man in the *Gospel*; *Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven*: Here Christ offers heavenly treasures for earthly treasures, unmixt treasures for mixt treasures, perfect treasures for imperfect treasures, satisfying treasures for unsatisfying treasures, lasting treasures for fading treasures; but the young man slips his opportunity, his season, and goes away sorrowful, and we never read more of him.

Mark 10. 22, 23, 24.

Ah! Young men, young men, do

do not put off the present season, do not neglect the present day, there is no time yours, but the present time; no day yours, but the present day; and therefore do not please your selves, and feed your selves with hopes of time to come, and that you will repent, but not yet; and lay hold on mercy, but not yet; and give up your selves to the Lord next week, next month, or next year; for that God that hath promised you mercy and favour, upon the day of your return, he hath not promised to prolong your lives, till that day comes. When a Souldier was brought before *Lamachus*, a Commander, for a mis-behaviour, and pleaded he would do so no more, *Lamachus* answered, (*Non licet in bello bis peccare,*) No man must offend twice in War: So God (especially in these Gospel-days, wherein the motions of Divine Justice are more smart and quick, than in former days) haply will not

Often consider what the damned would give (were it in their hands) for one season of Grace, for one opportunity of Mercy.

Heb 3. 2.

suffer men twice to neglect the day of grace, and let slip the season of mercy.

Ah! Young men, young men, you say you will be good toward the Lord before you die, but if you are not good towards the Lord to day, you may die to morrow; nay justice may leave him to be his own executioner to morrow, who will not repent, nor seek the Lord to day. I have read of a certain young man who being admonished of the evil of his way and course, and pressed to leave his wickedness; by the consideration of Death, Judgment and Eternity, which was a coming he answered, What do you tell me of these things, I will do well enough, for when Death comes I will speak but three words, and will help all; and so still he went on in his sinful way, but in the end coming to a Bridge on Horseback, to go over a deep water, the Horse stumbling, and he labouring to recover his Horse,

but could not, at last he lets go the bridle, and gave up himself and Horse to the waters, and was heard to say these three words, *Devil take all*: Here were three dreadful words indeed, and an example (with a witness) for all young men to beware, who think to repent with a three word repentance at last.

Diabolus capiat omnia.

Otho, the Emperor, slew himself with his own hands, but slept so soundly the night before, that the Grooms of his Chamber heard him snort.

Plutarch reporteth the like of *Cato*.

Young men, I will suppose you to be good Accomptants; now if you please to count the number, and mark the age of the Sacrifices in the Old Testament, you shall find more Kids and Lambs offered, than Goats and Old Sheep: You have no lease of your lives, you are not sure that you shall live to *Isaac*'s age, to live till your eyes wax dim; you are not sure that you shall live to *Jacob*'s years, and die leaning up-

Gen. 17. 1.

Heb. 11. 21.

Joh. 36.14.

As out of the bough of a tree are taken wedges to cleave it in pieces, so out of your own lusts are taken Engines to destroy us.

on the top of a staff. You read of them who die in their Youth and whose lives are among the unclean. Slip not the present season, neglect not the day of grace, let not Satan keep your souls and Christ any longer asunder, by telling of you, that you are too young, that hereafter will be time enough. St. *Austin* tells us, that by this very temptation, the Devil kept him off from receiving of Christ, from closing with Christ, seven years together; he could no sooner think of inquiring after Christ, of getting an interest in Christ, of leaving off his sinful courses, *&c.* but Satan would be still a suggesting, thou art too young to leave thy drunkenness, thou art too young to leave thy *Dalilah*'s, to leave thy harlots, till at last he cryed out, How long shall I say, It is too soon? Why may I not repent to day? And lay hold on Jesus Christ to day? *&c.* Ah young men! this is your day, this

this is your season, if you will not now hearken and obey, you may perish for ever. *Cæsar* had a Letter given him by *Artemidorus*, that morning he went to the Senate, wherein notice was given him of all the conspiracy of his murtherers; so that with ease he might have prevented his death, but neglecting the reading of it was slain, he slipt his season, and dies for it. Ah! how many for slipping gracious seasons and opportunities, have died for ever? Soul opportunities are more worth than a thousand Worlds; mercy is in them, grace and glory is in them, Heaven and Eternity is in them.

5. Motive.

Fifthly, To provoke you to be good betimes: Consider,

How just it is with God [illegible] serve the dregs of his wrath [illegible] who reserve the dregs of their days for him.

How can a Husband embrace that Wife in her old age, who hath spent all the time of her youth in following after strangers? Will any man receive such into his service, who have all their days served his enemies, and received such wounds, blows and bruises, that render them unfit for his service.

Deut. 32.9.

Ah! Young men, young men! *Do not thus foolishly and unwisely requite the Lord*, for all his patient waiting, his gracious wooing, and his merciful dealing with you. Ah! do not put off God to old age, for old, lame and sick Sacrifices reach as high as Heaven. Is not old age very unteachable? Is not old age are not men very unapt to take in, and as unapt to give out? In old age (oftentimes) men are men, and no men, they have eyes, but see not; ears, but hear not; tongues, but speak not; feet, but walk not. An aged man is but a moving Anatomy, or a living Mortuary; now how unlovely, how uncomely, how unwor-

Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda, Horatius. Many are the inconveniencies that do encompass an old man.

unworthily, nay, how incenſing, how provoking a thing muſt this needs be, when men will dally with God, and put him off till their doting days have overtaken them, till their ſpring is paſt, their ſummer overpaſt, and they arrived at the fall of the leaf, yea till winter colours have ſtained their heads with gray and hoary hairs? How provoking this is, you may ſee in thoſe ſad words of *Jeremiah*, Jer. 22.21, 22. *I ſpake unto thee in thy proſperity, but thou ſaidſt, I will not hear, this hath been thy manner from thy youth, and thou obeyedſt not my voice*: But will God put up this at their hands? no, therefore it follows in the next verſe, *Surely thou ſhalt be aſhamed and confounded for all thy wickedneſs.*

The reproach of the evil of wickedneſs is not to be added to old age. (*Solet enim ſenectus eſſe deformis, infirma, obliviosa, edentula, lucroſa, indocilis & moleſta,*) ſaith *Plutarch* in *Apothegm. Rem.* For old age uſeth to be deformed, weak, forgetful, toothleſs, covetous, unteachable, unquiet.

Oh that young men would let this Scripture lie warm every morning upon their hearts, that ſo they may not dare to put off God, and provoke him to their own confuſion? though you are young, and in your ſtrength,

yet are you ſtronger than God? can you make your party good with him? if you muſt needs be a provoking, provoke them that are your matches, and do not contend with him that is mightier than you, that can command you into nothing, or into Hell at pleaſure.

6. Motive.

Sixthly, Conſider, *That the ſooner you are good on earth, the greater will your reward be in Heaven.*

The ſooner you are gracious, the more at laſt you will be glorious. You read in the Scripture, of a reward, of a great reward, and of a full reward; now, *thoſe that are good betimes*, that know, ſeek, ſerve, and love the Lord, in the ſpring and morning of their youth, they are in the faireſt way of gaining the greateſt, and the fulleſt reward.

Pſal. 58. 11. Gen. 15. 1. Pſal. 19. 11. Mat. 5. 12. Heb. 10. 38. John 8. 5.

And this I ſhall make clear, by that which follows.

Firſt, The ſooner any man begins to be really good, the more good

good he will do in this World. Now the more good any man doth on Earth, the more glory he shall have in Heaven. Therefore my beloved Brethren, *Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know, that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* 1 Cor. 15. 58.

Mans wages, mans reward, shall be according to his works; he that doth most work here, shall have most reward hereafter.

God will at last proportion the one to the other, the reward to the work; *He which soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.* 2 Cor. 9. 6. Though no man shall be rewarded for his works, yet God will at last measure out happiness and blessedness to his people, according to their service, faithfulness, diligence, and work in this World. Grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full; glory is nothing else but a bright constellation of graces, Rom. 2. 5, 6, 7.

happiness, nothing but the quintessence of holiness. Grace and Glory differ (*non specie sed gradu*,) in degree, not kind, as the learned speak. Grace and Glory differ very little, the one is the seed, the other is the flower; Grace is Glory militant, and Glory is Grace triumphant; and a man may as well plead for equal degrees of Grace in this World, as he may plead for equal degrees of Glory in the other World. Surely the more grace here, the more glory hereafter, and the more work Christians do on earth, the more glory they shall have in Heaven; and the sooner men begin to be good, the more good they will do in this World, and the more they do here, the more they shall have hereafter. Philosophers seem to weigh our virtues with our vices, and according to the preponderation of either denominate us good or bad, and so deliver us up to reward or punishment.

No

No man can commend good works magnificently enough (saith *Luther*,) for one work of a Christian is more precious than Heaven and Earth, and therefore all the World cannot sufficiently reward one good work. And in another place saith the same Author, if I might have my desire, I would rather chuse the meanest work of a Countrey Christian (or poor Maid) than all the Victories and Triumphs of *Alexandar* the Great and of *Julius Cæsar*.

And again; Whatsoever the Saints do, though never so small and mean, it is great and glorious, because they do all in Faith, and by the word, saith the same Author. To prevent mistakes, you must remember, that the works that Jesus Christ will reward at last, are supernatural works, they are, 1. Works of God. 2. Wrought from God. 3. For God. 4. In God. 5. According to God; they are Works that flow from supernatural Principles, and they

are

are directed to supernatural ends, and performed in a supernatural way; now the sooner a man begins to be good, the more he will abound in these good works, and the more doubtless any man abounds in such good works on earth, the greater reward he shall have in Heaven; yet it must not be forgotten, that the best actions, the best works of Hypocrites, and all men out of Christ, are but (*splendida peccata*) fair and shining sins, beautiful abominations. And as the *Phœnix* in *Arabia* gathers sweet odoriferous sticks together, and then blows them with her wings, and burns her self with them: So many a carnal Professor burns himself with his own good works, that is by his expecting and trusting to receive that by his works, that is only to be received and expected from Jesus Christ. Though all that men can do towards the meriting of Heaven, is no more than the lifting up of

David made use of his bow, but did not trust to his bow. The Dove made use of her wings, but did not trust in her wings but in the Ark.

of a Feſtraw towards the meriting of a Kingdom; yet ſuch a proud piece man is, that he is ready enough to ſay with proud *Vega*, (*Cælum gratis non accipiam,*) I will not have Heaven of free coſt. A proud heart would fain have that of debt, which is meerly of grace, and deſires that to be of purchaſe, which God hath intended to be of free mercy, which made one to ſay, That he would ſwim through a Sea of Brimſtone, that he might come to Heaven at the laſt: but he that ſwims not thither through the Sea of Chriſts blood, ſhall never come there; man muſt ſwim thither, not through Brimſtone, but through Blood, or he miſcarries for ever.

Merces non eſt debita ſed gratuita.

Secondly, Again, the ſooner a man begins to be good, the more ſerviceable he will be to others, and the more he will provoke others to good; now all the good that you provoke others to, by Council, or Carriage, ſhall be

pur

put down to your account (as all the sins that men provoke others to, are put down to their accounts: *David* did but send a Letter concerning the death of *Uriah*, and the charge cometh, *Thou hast slain Uriah with the Sword*; the more I stir up others to sow, the more at last I shall reap; the sooner a man begins to be good, the more good he will do, the more serviceable he will be in the Town or City where he dwells, in the Family where he lives, among his Relations (Wife, Children, Kindred, Servants, *&c.*) with whom he converses.

2 Sam. 12. 8, 9. Isa. 38. 3. Neh. 13. 14.

Synesius speaks of some, who having a treasure of rare abilities in them, would as soon part with their hearts, as their conceptions; but such are rather Monsters than men.

The sooner a man begins to be gracious, the sooner and the more useful will his arts, his parts, his gifts, his graces, his mercies, his experiences, his Life, his Labours, his Prayers, his Counsels, his Example be, to all that are with him, to all that are about him.

Lilmod Lelammed, We therefore learn

learn that we may teach, is a Proverb among the *Rabbins*. And I do therefore lay in, and lay up (saith the Heathen) that I may draw forth again, and lay out for the good of many.

Ah! Young men, Young men, as you would be useful and serviceable to many, begin to be good betimes, and to lay in, and lay up, and lay out betimes, for the profit and advantage of others: *Augustin* accounted nothing his own that he did not communicate to others. The Bee doth store her Hive out of all sorts of Flowers, for the common benefit. 'Tis a base and unworthy spirit, for a man to make himself the centre of all his actions. The very Heathen man could say, That a mans Country, and his Friends, and others, challenge a great part of him: And indeed the best way to do our selves good, is to be a doing good to others; the best way to gather, is to scatter. Memorable

morable is that ſtory of *Parrhias*, a Merchant of *Ithaca*, who at Sea eſpying an ancient man a Captive in a Pirates Ship, took compaſſion on him and redeemed him; and bought his Commodities which the Pirates had taken from him, which were certain barrels of Pitch. The old man perceiving that not for any good ſervice he could do him, nor for the grain of that commodity, but meerly out of Charity and pity he had done this, diſcovered a great maſs of treaſure hidden in the Pitch, whereby the Merchant in a very ſhort time became very rich, at which very time God made that word good; *He that ſoweth liberally, ſhall reap liberally*; and that word. *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat*; and that word, *The liberal deviſeth liberal things; and by liberal things ſhall he ſtand.* It is fabled of *Midas*, that whatever he touched, he turned into Gold: It is certain that a liberal hand, a liberal heart turns all into Gold, into gain,

2 Cor. 9. 6.

Pro. 11. 25.

Iſa. 32. 8.

gain, as Scripture and Experience do abundantly evidence. Now if you put all these things together, nothing is more evident, than that those that begin to be good betimes, are in the ready way, the high way to be high in Heaven, when they shall cease from breathing on Earth. And therefore young men, as you would be high in Heaven, as you would have a great reward, a full reward, a massie weighty Crown, O labour to be good betimes! labour to get acquaintance with the Lord, and an interest in the Lord, in the spring and morning of your days.

7 Motive.

The seventh Motive, or Consideration to provoke and incite you to be good betimes, is, *To consider that the Lord is very much affected, and taken with your seeking of him, and following after him in the spring and morning of your youth.*

Go

Jer. 2. 2. Go and cry in the ears of *Jerusalem*, saying, *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou went after me in the Wilderness, in a Land that was not sown.*

Ah! how kindly, how sweetly did the Lord take this at their hands, that they followed him in their youth; while their bones were full of marrow, while they were strong and fit for service, while nature was fresh, lively and vigorous? In the Law, God called for the first of all things: he required not only the first fruits, but the very first of the first: *The first of the first-fruits of thy Land thou shalt bring into the House of the Lord thy God.* God is the first Being, the first good, and therefore deserves the first of the first, and the best of the best: the first and the best is not too good for him, who is Goodness itself. God, in that of *Lev.* 2. 14. is so passionately set upon having the first of the first, that he will

Exod. 23. 19.

'Tis truly said of God, that he is *Omnia super omnia.*

not

not ſtay till the green ears of Corn be ripe, but will have the green ears of Corn dryed in the fire, leſt he ſhould loſe his longing.

As many young Women, and ſickly Children, cannot ſtay till the fruit be ripe, but muſt have it while it is green; even ſo ſaith God, My heart, my deſires are ſo vehemently ſet upon the firſt fruits, the firſt things, that I cannot ſtay, I cannot ſatisfie my ſelf without them; and what would God teach us by all this; but to ſerve him with the firſt fruits of our age, the Primroſe of our Child-hood, the morning of our youth? God hath given you of the beſt, do not put him off with the worſt, with the worſt of your time, the worſt of your days, the worſt of your ſtrength, leſt he ſwear in his wrath, that you ſhall never enter into his reſt.

8. Motive.

The eighth Motive or Conſideration to provoke you to be good

good betimes to seek and serve the Lord in the morning of your youth, is to consider that, *This may be a special means to prevent many black temptations, and an encouragement to withstand all temptations that you may meet with from a tempting Devil, and a tempting World.*

Early Converts will never have cause to say, as that despairing Pope said, The Gross could do him no good he had so often sold it away.

An early turning to the Lord will prevent many temptations to despair, many temptations to neglect the means openly, to despise the means secretly: Many temptations about the being of God, the goodness, faithfulness, truth and justice of God, temptations to despair, temptations to lay violent hands on a mans self: temptations to question all that God hath said and that Christ hath suffered arises many times from mens delaying and putting off God to the last; all which with many others, are prevented by a mans seeking and serving of the Lord in the spring and morning of his youth. It is reported of the Harts of Sey-

that

bia, that they teach their young ones to leap from Bank to Bank, from Rock to Rock, from one Turf to another (by leaping before them) by which means, when they are hunted, no beast of prey can overtake them; so when persons exercise themselves in Godliness, when they are young, when they leap from one measure of holiness to another, when they are in the morning of their days; Satan, that mighty Hunter after Souls may pursue them with his temptations, but he shall not overtake them, he shall not prevail over them. As you see in *Moses*, *Joseph*, *Daniel*, and in the three Children; These knew the Lord, and gave up themselves to the Lord in the Prime and Primrose of their Youth, and these were all temptation-proof; Satan and the World pursued them, but could not overtake them; when the Devil and the World had done their worst, the young mens Bowes abode

Heb. 11.
Gen. 36.
Dan. 3. *ult.*

abode in strength, and their hands (to resist) were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of *Jacob*. *Ego non sum Ego*, said that young Convert, when tempted, I am not the man that I was.

Gen. 49. 23. 24.

Luther tells of a young Virgin, that used to resist all temptation with this, *Christiana sum*, I am a Christian. Early Converts may say, when tempted as he, Tell me not Satan what I have been, but what I am, and will be: Or as he in the like case, Whatsoever I was, I am now in Christ a new Creature; and that is it which troubleth thee; or as he, The more desperate my disease was, the more I admire the Physician. Yea, thou mayst yet stram at a peg higher, and say, The greater my sins were, the greater is my honour. As the Devils which once *Mary Magdalen* had, are mentioned for her glory. When *Pyrrhus* tempted *Fabricius* the first day with an Elephant, so huge and monstrous a Beast, as before he had not seen,

Bernard. Beza. Augustin. Such as thou art now, I was once, but such as I am now, thou wilt never be, said *Diogenes*, to a base fellow that told him, he had once been a forger of money.

seen, the next day with money and promises of honour; he answered, I fear not thy force, I am too wise for thy fraud.

Ah! Young men, young men, as you would be free from the saddest and darkest temptations; and as you would be armed against all temptations, O labour as for life, to be good betimes! seek and serve the Lord in the morning of your youth; no way like this for the preventing Earthquakes, Heartquakes, stormy days, and winter nights, *&c.*

9 Motive.

The ninth Motive or Consideration to stir up young men to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth, is, *To consider the worth and excellency of Souls.*

A Soul is a Spiritual immortal Substance, it is capable of the knowledge of God, it is capable of Union with God, of communion

Luk. 23.13. Mat. 19.28. Act. 7. ult

Phil. 1. 23. nion with God, and of a blessed and happy fruition of God.

Heb 2. 13, 14, 15, 16. Christ left his Fathers bosom for the good of Souls; he assumed mans nature for the salvation of mans Soul; Christ prayed for Souls, he Swate for Souls, he wept for Souls, he bled for Souls, he hung on the Cross for Souls, he trod the Wine-Press of his Fathers Wrath for Souls, he died for Souls, he rose again from Death for Souls, he ascended for Souls, he interceeds for Souls, and all the Glorious preparations that he hath been a making in Heaven these sixteen hundred years, is for Souls.

Isa. 63. 3, 4.

Joh. 14. 1, 2, 3. Ah Young men, young men! do not play the Courtier with your precious Souls; the Courtier doth all things late; he rises late, dines late, sups late, goes to bed late, repents late.

Ah Sirs! the good of your Souls is before all, and above all other things in the World, to be first

first regarded and provided for, and that partly, because it is the best and more noble part of man, and partly because therein mostly and properly is the Image of God stampt, and partly because it is the first converted, and partly because it shall be the first and most glorified.

O anima Dei in signita imagine, de sponsata fide, donata spiritu! Bern.

Ah Young men, young men! if they be worse than Infidels, that make no provision for their Families, what Monsters are they that make not provision for their own Souls? this will be bitterness in the end. 1 Tim. 5.8.

Cæsar Borgias being sick to death, lamenting said, When I lived, I provided for every thing but death; now I must die, and am unprovided to die. This was a Dart at his heart, and it will at last be a Dagger at yours, who feast your Bodies, but starve your Souls; who make liberal provision for your ignoble part, but no provision for your more noble part.

If they deserve a hanging, who feast their Slaves, and starve their Wives, that make provision for their Enemies, but none for their Friends; how will you escape hanging in Hell, who make provision for every thing, yea, for your very Lusts, but make no provision for your immortal Souls? We hate the *Turk*, for selling Christians for Slaves, and what shall we think then of those who sell themselves, their precious Souls, for toys and trifles that cannot profit, who practically say, what once a prophane Nobleman of *Naples* verbally said, viz. That he had two Souls in his Body, one for God, and another for whosoever would buy it.

Jam. 4. Hos. 7. 2, 3, 13.

Callenucius relates this story.

Ah Young Men, Young Men do not pawn your Souls, do not sell your Souls, do not exchange away your Souls, do not trifle and fool away your precious Souls they are Jewels, more worth than a thousand Worlds, yea, than Heaven and Earth; if they are safe, all is safe, but if they are lost, all is

lost

loſt, God loſt, and Chriſt loſt, and all the Society of glorious Angels and bleſſed Saints loſt, and Heaven loſt, and that for ever. *Grandenſis* tells of a Woman that was ſo affected with Souls miſcarrying, that ſhe beſought God to ſtop up the paſſage into Hell with her Soul and Body, that none might have entrance.

Ah! that all young perſons were ſo affected with the worth and excellency of their Souls, and ſo alarmed with the hazard and danger of loſing their Souls, as that they may in the ſpring and morning of their days enquire after the Lord, and ſeek him, and ſerve him with all their might, that ſo their precious and immortal Souls may be ſafe and happy for ever; but if all this will not do, then in the laſt place,

10 Motive.

Tenthly, Conſider, Young men, *That God will at laſt bring you to a reckoning*; He will at

Eccl. 1. 19.

last bring you to Judgment; *Rejoyce, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into Judgment.* In these words you have two things: Firſt, an Ironical conceſſion, he bids him rejoyce, &c. he yields him what he would have by an Irony, by way of mockage and bitter ſcoff. Now thou art young, and ſtrong, lively and luſty, and thy bones are full of marrow; thou art reſolved to be proud, and ſcornful, to indulge the fleſh, and to follow thy delights and pleaſures; well, take thy courſe or if thou dareſt; if thou haſt a mind to it, if thy heart be ſo ſet upon it, *Rejoyce in thy youth*, &c. The ſecond is a commination, or a ſad and ſevere premonition: But know thou, that for all theſe things, God will bring thee into Judgment, will bring thee

Hieron ſtill thought, that that noiſe was in his ears, (*Surgite mortui, & venite ad judicium*) Ariſe you dead, and come to Judgement.

these words import two things; First, the unwillingness of Youth to come to Judgment; Secondly, the unavoidableness, that Youth must come to Judgment; but how soon you shall be brought to Judgment, is only known to God.

S. *Augustine* confesses in one of his Books, that as long as his Conscience was gnawed with the guilt of some youthful Lust he was once insnared with, the very hearing of a day of Judgment, was even a Hell to him.

Histories tell us of a young man, who being for some Capital Offence condemned to die, grew gray in one nights space, and was therefore pityed, and spared.

Ah Young Men, Young Men! that the serious thoughts of this great Day, may put you upon breaking off the sins of your Youth, and the dedicating of your selves to the Knowledge, Love, and Service of the Lord, in

the ſpring and flower of your days: Ah Young Men! conſider the Errours of your Lives, the wickedneſs of your hearts, the ſinfulneſs of your ways, and that ſtrict account that e're long you muſt be brought to, before the Judge of all the World.

The Heathens themſelves had ſome kind of dread and expectation of ſuch a day; and therefore when St. *Paul* ſpake of Judgment to come, *Felix* trembled, though a Heathen.

Act. 24.25.

The Philoſophers had ſome dreams of a ſevere day of account, as appeareth by *Plato's Georgi*, and many paſſages in *Tully*, &c.

The bringing into Judgment is a thing which is known by reaſon, and is clear by the light of Nature: Wherefore in *Auſtria* one of the Nobles dying, who had lived fourſcore and thirteen years, and had ſpent all his Life in pleaſures and delights, never being troubled with any infirmity, and this being told to *Frederick* the Emperour; From hence, ſaith he, we may conclude, the Soul's Immortality; for if there be a God that

that ruleth this World (as Divines and Philosophers do teach) and that he is just, no one denieth; surely there are other places to which Souls after Death do go, and do receive for their deeds, either reward or punishment; for here we see that neither rewards are given to the good, nor punishment to the evil. *Æn. Sylvius.*

Ah Young men! knowing therefore the Terrour of the Lord, and the Terror of this day: Oh that you would be perswaded to flee from the Wrath to come; to cast away the Idols of your Souls, to repent and be converted in the Primrose of your Youth, *that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*; or else woe, woe to you that ever you were born! 1 Cor. 5. 9, 10, 11. Act. 3. 19,

I have read a Story of one, who being risen from the dead, and being asked in what condition he was, he made answer; No man doth believe, no man doth

believe, no man doth believe. And being further asked what he meant by that repetition, he answered, No man doth believe how exactly God examineth, how strictly God judgeth, how severely he punisheth. Oh that the ways of most young persons did not declare to all the World, that they do not, that they will not believe the dread and terror of that day, that will admit of no Plea, no place for Apology or Appeal! The highest and last Tribunal can never be appealed from, or repealed.

The *Turks* have a tradition, and frantick opinion that wicked men shall at the great day carry their sins in Satchels after their Captain *Cain*; but well would it be for them, if this should be all their punishment in that great day.

Now if for all that hath been said, you are resolved to spend the flower of your days, and the prime of your strength, in the service of Sin and the World, then know, that no Tongue can express, no Heart can conceive, that trouble of Mind, that terrour of Soul, that horrour of Conscience, that fear and amazement, that weeping and wailing, that crying and roaring, that sighing and groaning,

ing, that cursing and banning, that stamping and tearing, that wringing of hands, and gnashing of teeth, that certainly shall attend you, when God shall bring you into Judgment for all your looseness, and lightness, for all your wickedness and wantonness, for all your prophaneness and baseness, for all your neglect of God, your grieving the Comforter, your trampling under foot the blood of a Saviour, for your despising the means, for your prizing Earth above Heaven, and the Pleasures of this World above the Pleasures that be at God's right hand.

Oh! how will you wish in that day, when your sins shall be charged on you, when Justice shall be armed against you, when Conscience shall be gnawing within you, when the World shall be a flaming fire about you, when the Gates of Heaven shall be shut against you, and the flames of Hell ready to take hold of you, when

St. *Chrysostom* speaking of this day, saith, For Christ this day to say, *Depart from me*, is a thing more terrible than a thousand Hells, *Chry. Hom. ad. Pop. Antioch.*

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Angels and Saints ſhall ſit in Judgment upon you, and for ever turn their faces from you; when evil ſpirits ſhall be terrifying of you, and Jeſus Chriſt for ever diſowning of you; how will you (I ſay) wiſh in that day, that you had never been born, or that you might now be unborn, or that your Mothers Wombs had proved your Tombs? O how will you then wiſh to be turn'd into a Bird, a Beaſt, a Stock, a Stone, a Toad, a Tree! Oh that our immortal Souls were mortal! O that we were nothing! O that we were any thing but what we are!

John Damaſc. & Anonym. de quæſt. Noviſſ. Impreſſ. Daven Ann. 1494.

I have read a remarkable Story of a King that was heavy, and ſad, and wept; which when his Brother ſaw, he asked him why he was ſo penſive? Becauſe (ſaith he) I have judged others, and now I muſt be judged my ſelf: And why (ſaith his Brother) do you ſo take on for this, it will (haply) be a long time e're that day come, and beſides, that is but a ſlight matter.

ter. The King said little to it for the present.

Now it was a Custom in that Country, when any had committed Treason, there was a Trumpet sounded at his door in the night-time, and he was next day brought out to be executed; now the King commanded a Trumpet to be sounded at his Brothers door in the night time, who awakening out of his sleep when he heard it, arose, and came quaking, and trembling to the King: How now, said the King? what's the matter you are so affrighted? I am, said he, attached of Treason, and next morning I shall be executed; Why (saith the King to him again,) are you so troubled at that; knowing that you shall be judged by your Brother, and for a matter that your Conscience tells you, you are clear of? How much more therefore may I be afraid, seeing that God shall judge me, and not in a matter that my Conscience frees me

of,

of, but of that whereof I am guilty? and besides this, if the worst come, it is but a temporary death you shall die, but I am liable to death eternal, both of the Body and Soul. I will leave the Application to those young persons that put this day afar off, and whom no arguments will move to be good betimes, and to acquaint themselves with the Lord in the morning of their youth.

But now to those Young Men and Women, who begin to seek, serve, and love the Lord in the Primrose of their days, they day of Judgment will be to them (*melodia in aure, Jubilum in corde*,) like Musick in the ear, and a *Jubilee* in the heart; this day will be to them, a day of Refreshing, a day of Redemption, a day of Vindication, a day of Coronation, a day of Consolation, a day of Salvation; it will be to them a Marriage day, a Harvest day, a Pay day: Now the Lord will pay them for all the prayers they have

Act. 3. 19, 20, 21, 22. Mic. 7. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Rev. 19. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Matt. 25. 34, to 41.

have made, for all the Sermons they have heard, for all the tears they have ſhed: In this great day Chriſt will remember all the individual Offices of Love and Friendſhip ſhewed to any of his; now he will mention many things for their honour and comfort, that they never minded; now the leaſt and loweſt acts of Love and Pity towards his, ſhall be interpreted as a ſpecial kindneſs ſhewed to himſelf. Now the Crown ſhall be ſet upon their heads, and the Royal Robe put upon their backs; now all the World ſhall ſee that they have not ſerved the Lord for nought: Now Chriſt will paſs over all their weakneſſes, and make honourable mention of all the Services they have performed, of all the Mercies they have improved, and of all the great things that for his Name and Glory they have ſuffered.

2 Tim. 4. 8. Mal. 3. 17, 18.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Quest. BUT here an apt Question may be moved.

Whether at this great day, the sins of the Saints shall be brought into the judgment of discussion and discovery or no? whether the Lord will in this day publickly manifest, proclaim, and make mention of the sins of his people, or no?

I humbly judge according to my present light, that he will not; and my Reasons for it are these; *viz.*

The first is drawn from Christ's Judicial Proceedings in the last Day, set down largely and clearly, in the 25th of *Matthew*, where he enumerateth only the good works they had done, but takes no notice of the spots and blots, of the stains and blemishes, of the infirmities and enormities, of the weaknesses and wickednesses of his people. My

Deut. 32. 4, 5, 6.

Second Reason is taken from Christ's vehement protestations, that

that they shall not come into Judgment; *John* 5. 24. *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.* Those words shall not come into *condemnation*, are not rightly translated, the Original is εἰς κρίσιν, shall not come into *Judgment*, not into *damnation*, as you read it in all your *English* Books: I will not say, what should put men upon this exposition, rather than a true translation of the Original word. Further, it is very observable, that no Evangelist useth this double asseveration but St. *John*, and he never useth it but in matters of greatest weight and importance, and to shew the earnestness of his Spirit, and to stir us up to better attention, and to put the thing asserted out of all question, and beyond all contradiction; as when we would put a thing for ever out of all question, we do it by a double

Vide Aquin. 87. Suppl. Est. in l. 4. Sin. dist. 47.

Joh. 1. 51. ch. 3. 3, 11. ch. 6. 26, 32, 47, 53. &c.

double asseveration, Verily, Verily, 'tis so, &c.

Thirdly; Because his not bringing their sins into Judgment, doth most and best agree with many precious and glorious expressions that we find scattered (as so many shining, sparkling Pearls) up and down in Scripture: As

First, With those of God's blotting out the sins of his People. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* Isa. 43. 25. *I have blotted out, as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.* Isa. 44. 22.

Who is this that blots out transgressions? he that hath the Keys of Heaven and Hell at his girdle, that opens and no man shuts, that shuts and no mans opens, he that hath the power of life and death, of condemning and absolving, of killing and making alive, he it is that blotteth out transgressions: If an Under Officer should blot out an Indictment, that perhaps might do

do a man no good, a man might for all that be at last cast by the Judge: But when the Judge or King shall blot out the Indictment with their own hand, then the Indictment cannot return: now this is every Believers case and happiness.

Secondly; To those glorious expressions of Gods not remembring of their sins any more: *Isa.* 43.25. *And I will not remember thy sins:* Jer. 31. 34. *And they shall teach no more every man his Neighbour and every man his Brother, saying, Know ye the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them, to the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.* So the Apostle, *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins,* Heb. 8. 12. *and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

And again, the same Apostle saith, *This is the Covenant that I will make with them; After those days,*

Heb. 10. 17. That which Cicero said flatteringly of Cæsar, is truly affirmed of God; *Nihil obliviſci ſolet præter injurias*, he forgetteth nothing but the wrongs that daily are done him by his.

days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my Laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more.

The meaning is, their iniquities ſhall be quite forgotten; I will never mention them more, I will never take notice of them more, they ſhall never hear more of them from me: Though God hath an Iron memory to remember the ſins of the wicked, yet he hath no memory to remember the ſins of the righteous.

Thirdly; His not bringing their ſins into Judgment, doth moſt and beſt agree with thoſe bleſſed expreſſions, of his caſting their ſins into the depth of the Sea, and of his caſting them behind his back. *He will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us, he will ſubdue our iniquities; and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the Sea.* Where ſin is once pardoned, the Remiſſion ſtands

Mic. 7. 19.

ſtands never to be repealed; pardoned ſin ſhall never come in account againſt the pardoned man before God any more; for ſo much doth this borrowed ſpeech import: If a thing were caſt into a River, it might be brought up again; or if it were caſt upon the Sea, it might be diſcerned and taken up again; but when it is caſt into the depths, the bottom of the Sea, it can never be buoyed up again.

By the Metaphor in the Text, the Lord would have us to know, that ſins pardoned ſhall riſe no more, they ſhall never be ſeen more, they ſhall never come on to the account more; he will ſo drown their ſins, that they ſhall never come up before him the ſecond time.

But ſo much that other Scripture imports; *Behold, for Peace I had great bitterneſs; But thou haſt in love to my Soul delivered it from the Pit of Corruption;* Iſa. 38. 17.

for

for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back: These last words are a borrowed speech, taken from the manner of men, who are wont to cast behind their backs such things as they have no mind to see, regard or remember. A gracious soul hath always his sins before his face (*I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me*;) and therefore no wonder if the Lord cast them behind his back. The Father soon forgets, and casts behind his back those faults that the Child remembers, and hath always in his eyes; so doth the Father of Spirits.

Psal. 51. 3.

Fourthly; *His not bringing their sins into Judgment*, doth best agree with that sweet and choice expression of Gods pardoning the sins of his people.

Jer. 33. 8.

And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. So in *Micah*,

Who

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his Heritage? (as though he would not see it, but wink at it,) *he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy.* The Hebrew word, (*Nose* from *Nasa*) that is here rendred *pardoned* signifies a taking away when God pardons sin, he takes it there away, that if it should be sought for, yet it could not be found, as the Prophet speaks; *In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve*; and these words *and passeth by*, in the (aforecited) seventh of *Micah*, and the 18. v. according to the Hebrew (*Vegnober Gnul*) is *and passeth over*; *God passeth over the transgression of his heritage*; that is he takes no notice of it, as a man in a deep muse, or as one that hath haste of business; seeth not

Mic. 7. 18.

Jer. 50. 20.

עבר
Gnabar, he passed over.

not things before him, his mind being buſied about other matters, he neglects all to mind his buſineſs.

As *David*, when he ſaw in *Mephiboſheth* the feature of his friend *Jonathan*, took no notice of his lameneſs, or any other defect, or deformity: So God beholding in his People the glorious Image of his Son, winks at all their faults and deformities, which made *Luther* ſay, *Do with me what thou wilt, ſince thou haſt pardoned my ſin*; and what is it to pardon ſin, but not to mention ſin? Iſa. 40. 1, 2.

Fifthly; *His not bringing their ſins into the Judgment of Diſcuſſion and Diſcovery*, doth beſt agree to thoſe expreſſions of forgiving, and covering; *Bleſſed is he whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered.* In the Original it is in the plural, *Bleſſednesſes*; ſo here is a plurality of Bleſſings, a Chain of Pearls. Pſal. 32. 1.

The like expreſſion you have in the 85 *Pſalm*, and the ſecond verſe: *Thou*

Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin; Selah. For the understanding of these Scriptures aright, take notice, that to cover, is a Metaphorical expression; Covering is such an action which is opposed to disclosure; to be covered, it is to be so hid and closed as not to appear. Some take the Metaphor from filthy, loathsome objects, which are covered from our eyes, as dead Carkasses are buried under the ground; some from Garments that are put upon us to cover our nakedness; others from the *Egyptians* that were drowned in the Red Sea, and so covered with water; others from a great Gulph in the earth that is filled up, and covered with earth, injected into it; and others make it in the last place, an allusive expression to the mercy seat, over which was a covering.

Sic velantur, ut in judicio non revelentur.

Now all these Metaphors in the general, tend to shew this, that the Lord will not look, he will not see

see, he will not take notice of the sins he hath pardoned, to call them any more to a judicial account.

As when a Prince reads over many treasons, and rebellions, and meets with such and such which he hath pardoned, he reads on, he passeth by, he taketh no notice of them, the pardoned person shall never hear more of them, he will never call him to account for those sins more: So here, *&c.* When *Cæsar* was painted he put his finger upon his scar, his wart. God puts his finger upon all his Peoples scars and warts, upon all their weaknesses and infirmities, that nothing can be seen but what is fair and lovely: *Thou art all fair, my Love, and there is no spot in thee*, Cant. 4. 7.

Sixthly, It best agrees to that expression of not imputing of sin, Psal. 32. 2. *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* So the Apostle in that *Rom.* 4. 6, 7, 8. Not

not

not to impute iniquity, is not to charge Iniquity, not to set Iniquity upon his score who is blessed and pardoned, &c.

Seventhly and lastly, It best agrees with that expression that you have in the 103. *Psal.* and the 11, and 12. *Verses*; *For as the Heaven is high above the Earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him: As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* What a vast distance is there betwixt the *East* and *West*! of all visible Latitudes, this is the greatest: And thus much for the third Argument. The

Fourth Argument, that prevaileth with me to judge that Jesus Christ will not bring the sins of the Saints into the Judgment of discussion and discovery in the great day, is Because it seems unsuitable to three considerable things, for Jesus Christ to proclaim the infirmities and miscarriages of his people to all the World.

First, It seems to be unsuitable to the glory and solemnity of the day, which to the Saints will be a day of refreshing, a day of redemption, a day of coronation, as hath been already proved; now how suitable to the great duty of Solemnity, the Proclamation of the Saints sins will be, I leave the Reader to judge.

Secondly, It seems unsuitable that all those near and dear Relations that *Jesus Christ* stands in toward him; he stands in the Relation of a *Father*, a *Brother*, a *Head*, a *Husband*, a *Friend*, an *Advocate*: Now are not all these by the Law of Relation, bound rather to hide and keep secret (at least, from the world) the weaknesses and infirmities of their near and dear Relations and is not Christ? is not Christ more obliged, by how much he is more a *Father*, a *Brother*, a *Head*, a *Husband*, &c. in a spiritual way, than any others can be in a natural way &c.

Isa. 9. 6.
Heb. 2. 11, 12.
Eph. 1. 21, 22.
Rev. 19. 7.
Joh. 15. 1.
Joh. 2. 1, 2.

Thirdly, It seems very unsuitable to what the Lord Jesus requires of his in this World; the Lord requires that his People should cast a Mantle of love, of wisdom, of silence, and secrecie over one anothers weaknesses and infirmities.

Hatred stirreth up strifes, but Love covereth all sins; Love's Mantle is very large; Love will find a hand, a Plaister to clap upon every sore. *Flavius Vespasianus*, (the Emperour) was very ready to conceal his friends Vices, and as redy to reveal their Virtues: So is Divine Love in the Hearts of the Saints; *If thy Brother offend thee go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother.* As the Pills of Reprehension are to be gilded, and sugared over with much gentleness and softness, so they are to be given in *secret*; *Tell him between him and thee alone.* Tale-bearers and Tale-hearers are alike abominable.

Pro. 10.12. 1 Pet. 4.8.

Mat. 18.15.

Heaven is too hot and too holy a place for them. *Psal.* 15. 3. Nor will Jesus Christ have us carry thus towards offending Christians, and will he himself act otherwise? Nay, it is an evil in us to lay open the weaknesses and infirmities of the Saints to the World; and will it be an excellency, a glory, a vertue in Christ to do it in the great day? &c.

Pro. 19. 11. 1 Pet. 4. 8.

A fifth Argument is this, It is the glory of a man to pass over a Transgression. *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression*, or to pass by it, as we say by persons or things we know not, or would take no notice of. Now if it be the glory of a man to pass over a Transgression, and will it not much more be the glory of Christ silently to pass over the transgressions of his People in that great day? the greater the rebellions are that a Prince passes over, and takes no notice of, the more is the Honour and Glory

Mat. 18. 21.

Non amo quenquam nisi offendam, said a Heathen.

and so doubtless it will be Christs, in that great day, to pass over all the Treasons and Rebellions of his people, to take no notice of them, to forget them as well to forgive them.

The Heathens have long since observed, that in nothing man came nearer to the glory and perfection of God himself, than in goodness and Clemency. Surely, if it be such an honour to man, *to pass over a Transgression*, it cannot be a dishonour to Christ, to pass over the Transgressions of his People, he having already buried them in the Sea of his blood. Again, saith *Solomon*, *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.* And why it should not make for the Glory of *Divine Love*, to conceal the sins of the Saints in that great Day, I know not: and whether the concealing the sins of the Saints in the great day, will not make most for their joy, and wicked mens sorrow; for their comfort, and wicked mens terrour, Prov. 25. 2.

and torment, I will leave you to judge, and time and experience to decide: and thus much for the resolution of that great Question; Having done with the Motives that may encourage and provoke young men to be good betimes, to know, love, fear and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their days.

CHAP. VI

I Shall now come to those directions and helps which must (by assistance from Heaven) be put in practice, if ever you would be good betimes, and serve the Lord in the Primrose of your days. Now all that I shall say, will fall under these two Heads.

First, *Some things you must carefully and warily decline, and avoid your selves against.* And,

Secondly, *There are other things that you must prosecute and follow.*

First, *There are some things that you must warily decline, and avoid.*

I. Direction.

First, *If ever you would be good betimes, if you would be gracious in the spring and morning of your youth, Oh! then take heed of putting the day of Death far from you.*

Young men are very prone to look upon death afar off, and put it at a great distance from them; they are apt to say to death as *Pharaoh* said to *Moses*, *Get thee from me, and let me see thy face no more*; if old men discourse to them of death, they are ready to answer, as the High-Priest did *Judas*, (in a different case,) *What is that to us? Look you unto it*: we know sickness will come, and death is a debt that we must all pay, but surely these Guests are a great way from us; for doth not *David* say, *The years of a man are threescore years and ten*? we have *calculated our Nativities*, and we cannot *abate* a day, a minute, a moment of *threescore and ten*, and therefore it is *enough death* to us to think *of death*, there being so

Amos 6. 3.

Exod. 10. 28.

Mat. 27. 4.

Psal. 90. 10.

great a distance between our birth-day and our dying day, as we have cast up the account.

Ah! young men, it is sad, it is very sad, when you are so wittily wicked as to say with those in Ezekiel; *Behold they of the house of Israel say, the Vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he propheseth of the times that are afar off.*

Ezek. 12. 27.

Aht young men, young men, by putting far away this day, you gratifie Satan, you strengthen Sin, you provoke the Lord, you make the work of Faith and Repentance more hard and difficult, you lay a sad foundation for the greatest fears and doubts.

Ah! How soon may that sad word be fulfilled upon you? *The Lord of that Servant, that saith, his Lord delayeth his coming, shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, (or cut him off) and appoint him his portion with Hypocrites, there shall be weeping and gnashing of*

Mat. 24. 48, 49, 50, 51.

teeth,

teeth, when *Sodom*, when *Pharaoh*, when *Agag*, when *Amalech*, when *Haman*, when *Herop*, when *Nebuchadnezzar*, when *Belshazzer*, when *Dives*, when the fool in the Gospel, were all in their Prime, their Pride, when they were all in a flourishing state, and upon the very top of their Glory, how strangely, how suddenly, how sadly, how fearfully, how wonderfully were they brought down to the Grave, to Hell!

Ah! young Man who art thou? and what is thy Name, or Fame? what is thy Power or Place? what is thy Dignity or Glory? that thou darest promise thy self an exemption from sharing in as bad a Portion as ever Justice gave to those who once were very high; who were seated among the Stars, but are now brought down to the sides of the Pit? I have read a Story of one that gave a young Prodigal a Ring with a Death's Head, on this condition, that he should one hour daily, for seven

Isa. 13. 10. to the 17. *verse*.

days together, look and think upon it, which bred a great change in his life.

Ah, young men; the serious thoughts of Death may do that for you, that neither friends, counsel, example, prayers, Sermons, tears, have not done to this very day. Well, remember this, to labour not to die, is labour in vain, and to put this day far from you, and to live without fear of Death, is to die living. Death seizeth on old men, and lays wait for the youngest. Death is oftentimes as near to the young mans back, as it is to the old mans face.

Senibus mors in januis, Adolescentibus in insidiis, Bern. *De convers. ad Cler. c.* 14.

It is storied of *Charles* the fourth, King of *France*, that being one time affected with the sense of his many and great Sins, fetch'd a deep sigh and said to his Wife, By the help of God I will now so carry my self all my life long, that I will never offend him more; which words he had no sooner uttered, but he fell down and dyed.

Do

Do not, young men, put this day far from you, left you are suddenly surprized, and then you cry out (when too late,) *A Kingdom for a Christ, A Kingdom for a Christ*; as once crook-backt *Richard* the Third in his distress, *A Kingdom for a Horse, A Kingdom for a Horse.*

Ah young men! did you never hear of a young man that cryed out; *Oh! I am so sick, that I cannot live, and yet* (woful wretch that I am) *so sinful that I dare not die; Oh that I might live! Oh that I might die! Oh that I might do neither?* Well young Men, remember this; the frequent, the serious thoughts of Death will prevent many a Sin; it will arm you against many temptations, it will secure you from many afflictions, it will keep you from doting on the World, it will make you do much in a little time, it will make death easie when it comes; and it will make you look out betimes for a Kingdom that shakes

1 Pet. 1. 13, 14. Eccl. 9. 10.

shakes not, for Riches that corrupt not and for Glory that fadeth not away. Therefore do not, Oh! do not put the day of Death far from you. Take heed of crying, *Cras, Cras*, to morrow, to morrow, saith *Luther*, for a man lives forty years before he knows himself to be a fool, and by that time he sees his folly, his life is finished; so men die before they begin to live.

II. Direction

Secondly, *If you would be good betimes, then take heed of leaning to your own understanding.*

This Counsel wise *Solomon* gives to his Son, (or the young men in his time;) *My Son forget not my Law, and let thy heart keep my commandments: Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thy own understanding.*

Youth is the age of folly, of vain hopes, and overgrown confidence: Ah! how wise might many

Pro. 3. 1, 5. *Lean not*, is a Metaphor from an old or sick man leaning on his staff, &c.

many have been, had they not been too early wise in their own opinion?

Rehoboam's Young Counsellours proved the overthrow of his Kingdom. 'Tis brave for youth, in all things to be discreet and sober-minded. Three Virtues, they say, are prime Ornaments of Youth; Modesty, Silence and Obedience.

Ah! Young men keep close in every action to this one Principle; *viz.* In every action resolve to be discreet and wise, rather than affectionate and singular.

I remember, that a young Gentleman of *Athens*, being to answer for his life, hired an Orator to make his defence, and it pleased him well at his first reading; but when the young man by often reading it, that he might recite it publickly by heart, begun to grow weary and displeased with it, the Orator bid him consider, that the Judges

Judges and the people were to hear it but once; and then it was likely that they at the first instant might be as well pleased as he.

Ah! Young men, your leaning upon your selves, or upon others, will in the end be bitterness and vexation of Spirit; young men are very apt to lean upon their own Wit, Wisdom, Arts, Parts, as old men are to lean upon a staff to support them; (as the Hebrew word signifies, that is rendred *Lean*; in that of *Prov.* 3. 5.) This hath been the bane of many a a choice wit, the loss of many a brave head, the ruine of many a subtil pate.

שעז *Shaguaz.*

Ajax thought it was only for Cowards and weaklings to lean upon the Lord for succour; not for him, whenced he was foiled. Lean not to great parts, lean not to natural or acquired acccomplishments, lest you lose them and your selves too. Leaning to natu-

natural or moral excellencies, is the ready way to be stript of all. *Babylon* that bore herself bold upon her high Towers, thick Walls, and twenty years provision laid in for a seige, was surprized by *Cyrus*.

'Twas said of *Cæsar*, that he received not his wounds from the swords of enemies, but from the hands of friends; that is, from trusting in them.

Ah! how many young men have been wounded, yea, slain by trusting to their own understanding, their own abilities?

'Twas an excellent saying of St. *Austin*, (*In te stas & non stas,*) he that stands upon his own strength, shall never stand. A Creature is like a single drop left to it self, it spends and wasts it self presently; but, if like a drop in the Fountain and Occean of Being, it hath abundance of security.

Ah Young men, young men! if you will needs be leaning, then lean upon precious Promi-

2 Pet. 1. 4. Psal. 27. 1.

ses,

ses, lean upon the Rock that is higher than your selves, lean upon the Lord *Jesus Christ*, as *John* did who was the youngest of all the Disciples, and the most beloved of all the Disciples, *John* leaned much, and *Christ* loved him much. O lean upon Christs wisdom for direction, lean upon his power for protection, lean upon (his Purse) his sulness for provision, lean upon his eye for abrobation, lean upon his righteousness for justification, lean upon his blood for remission, lean upon his merit for Salvation.

Joh. 21. 10.

Cant. 8. 5.

As the young Vine without the Wall to support her, will fall and sink; So will you young men, without Christ puts under his everlasting arms to support you, and uphold you; therefore above all leanings, lean upon him; by leaning on him, you will engage him; by leaning on him, you will gain more honour than you can give; by leaning on him, you may even command him, and make *Him eternally yours.*

III. Di-

III. Direction.

Thirdly, *If you would be good betimes, if you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then take heed of flatterers and flattery.*

Ah! How many young Men might have been very good, who are now exceeding bad, by hearkening to Flatterers, and affecting Flattery? Flattery undid young *Rehoboam*, *Ahab*, *Herod*, *Nero*, *Alexander*, &c. Flatterers are soul-murderers, they are soul-undoers: they are like evil Chirurgeons, that skin over the wound, but never heal it. 1 King. 12. and *ch.* 21. Act. 13.22, 23, 24.

Anastasius the Emperours Motto was, (*Mellitum veneni blanda Oratio*,) Smooth talk proves often sweet poyson. Flattery is the very Spring and Mother of all impiety; it blows the Trumpet, and draws poor Souls into Rebellion against God, as *Sheba* drew *Israel* to rebell against *David*; it put our first Parents

rents upon tasting the *forbidden fruit*; it put *Absalom* upon dethroning of his Father; it put *Haman* upon plotting the ruine of the *Jews*; it put *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* upon rebelling against *Moses*; it makes men *call evil good, and good evil, darkness light, and light darkness*, &c. It puts persons upon neglecting the means of Grace, upon undervaluing the means of Grace, and upon contemning the means of Grace; it puts men upon abusing God, slighting Christ, and vexing the Spirit; it unmans a man, it makes him call black white, and white black; it makes a man change Pearls for Pebbles, and Gold for Counters; it makes a man judge himself wise, when he is foolish; knowing, when he is ignorant; holy, when he is prophane; free, when he is a Prisoner; rich, when he is poor; high, when he is low; full, when he is empty; happy, when he is miserable.

The Flatterers told *Dionysius*, that his Pittle was as sweet as Honey.

Rev. 3. 17, 18.

Ah

Ah! Young men and young women, take heed of flatterers, they are the very worst of Sinners; they are left of God, blinded by Satan, hardened in Sin, and ripened for Hell. God declares sadly against them, and that in his *Word*, and in his *Works*; in his *Word*, as you may see by comparing these Scriptures together; *Deut.* 29. 18, 19, 20. *Psal.* 78. 36. *Psal.* 36. 1, 2. *Job.* 17. 5. *Ezek.* 12, 24. *Dan.* 11. 21, 32, 34. *Pf.* 12. 2, 3. *They speak vanity every one with his neighbour with flattering lips, and with a double heart do they speak. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things*: And as God declares sadly against them in his *Word*, so he hath declared terribly against them in his *Works*, as you may run and read in his Judgments executed upon *Ahab*'s flattering Prophets, and upon *Haman*, and upon *Daniel*'s (Princely) false Accusers, &c. And why then will not you

Karab signifies any cutting off, either by Death, or Banishment, &c.

you stop your ears against those wretches that the hand and heart of God is so much against?

Again, As God declares against them, so good men detest them, and declare against them, as you may see by comparing these Scriptures together; *Psalm.* 5. 8, 9, 10. *Prov.* 3. 19. *Prov.* 7. 21. *Prov.* 28. 23. *Job.* 32. 21, 22. 1 *Thes.* 2. 5. 10. *Prov.* 20. 19. *Meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.* Why so? Why? Because, *A man that flattereth his Neighbour, spreadeth a Net for his Feet.* Prov. 29. 5. The Hebrew word (*Mabbalick*, from *Halack*) that is here rendred *Flatterer*, signifieth a *Smooth-boots*, a soft butter spoken man, because Flatterers use smooth soft speeches. Also the word signifies *to divide*, because a Flatterers tongue is divided from his heart. Flatterers have their Nets, and those that give ear to them, will be taken to their ruine. *A lying*

A Preacher in *Constantine*'s time, presumed to call the Emperour *Saint* to his face, but he went away with a check. *Euseb. de vit. Const.* lib. 44.

tongue

tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth worketh ruine, Prov. 26. ult. A flattering mouth ruines name, fame, estate, body, soul, life.

Valerian the *Roman* Emperour used to say, *Non acerbum, sed blandum*, not bitter, but flattering words do all the mischief.

When *Alexander* the Great was hit with an Arrow in the seige of an *Indian* City, which would not heal, he said to his Parasites, *You say that I am Jupiter's Son, but this wound cries, that I am but a Man.*

Now shall good men detest them and abhor them, as they are the Pest of Pests, the Plague of Plagues; and will you own them, will you take pleasure in them, to your ruine here and hereafter? the Lord forbid. O say to all Flatterers as he to his Idols; *Get you hence, for what have I more to do with you?*

Nay, once more consider, that not

The Hebrew word דבב *Dabba*, signifies such a violent forceing of one, as he cannot stand. It signifies to throw down, to drive on forwards, till a man fall into destruction.

Hos. 14. 8.

not only the good, but the bad, not only the best, but (some of) the worst of men have manifested their detestation of Flatterers and Flatterry.

Leo the Emperor used to say, (*Occulti inimici pessimi,*) a close enemy is far worse than an open. When a Court Parasite praised *Sigismund* the Emperor above measure, the Emperor gave him a a sound box on the Ear.

When *Aristobulus* the Historian presented to *Alexander* the Great, a Book that he had written of his glorious Acts, wherein he had flatteringly made him greater than he was; *Alexander* (after he had read the Book) threw it into the River *Hydaspes*, and said to the Author, It were a good deed to throw thee after it.

When the Flatterers flattered *Antigonus*, he cryed out, (*Mentiris, mentiris in gutture, hæ virtutes non lacent in me;*) Thou lyest, thou lyest in thy throat, these virtues

tues that thou speakest of, I have not in me; but I am like a Leopard, that hath ten black spots to one white.

Augustus Cæsar, and *Tiberius Cæsar* were deadly enemies to flatterers insomuch that they would not be called Lords by their own Children.

A good Symbol is attributed to *Trebonianus Gallus*, viz. (*Nemo amicus idem & adulator*,) No flatterer can be a true friend.

Aristippus (the Philosopher) seeing *Diogenes* washing of Herbs for his Dinner, said, If *Diogenes* knew how to make use of Kings, he need not live upon raw Herbs, as he doth; to which *Diogenes* replyed, That if *Aristippus* could content himself with Herbs, he need not to turn Spaniel, or to Flatter King *Dyonisius* for a meal's meat.

Ah! Young men, young men, shall God, shall good men, shall bad men detest and declare against Flatterers and Flattery, and will not

not you turn a deaf ear upon them, yea, fly from them as from a Serpent, and shun them, as you would shun Hell it self? If you do not, the very Heathens but now cited, will rise in judgment against you.

Flatterers are the very worst of Sinners. The Flatterers told *Cæsar*, that his Freckles in his Face were like the Stars in the Firmament; they bought and sold *Aurelius* the Emperour at pleasure, and *Augustus* complained when *Varrus* was dead, that he had none now left, that would deal plainly and faithfully with him.

So men may gain by Flattery, they will be like *Harpalus*, who said (*Quod Regi placet, mihi placet*,) that which pleaseth the King, pleaseth me, when *Astrages* set his own Son before him, to feed upon him.

O but let every young man say, (into whose hands this Treatise shall fall,) *Quod Deo placet, mihi placet*.

cet, That which pleaseth God pleaseth me.

I have been the longer upon this out of love to young mens Souls, who are so apt to be insnared in the Flatterers Net; if ever you would be good in good earnest, you must abhor Flatterers, as the first-born of the Devil, and as such as are most pernicious to mens happiness, both here and hereafter.

It is reported of one *Oramazes*, that he had an inchanted Egg, in which (as he boasted himself) he had enclosed all the happiness of the World; but being broken, nothing was found in it but wind. *Flatterers are the greatest Cheaters, the greatest Deceivers in the World.*

They say of the *Crocodile*, that when he hath killed a man, he will weep over him, as if he were sorry, and did repent for what he had done. The Application is easie.

Whilst an *Ass* is stroaked under the belly, you may lay on his back what burthen you please.

IV. Direction,

Fourthly, *If you would be good betimes, if you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then take heed of engaged affections to the things of the World.*

The Young man in the Gospel took many a step toward Heaven; *All these things have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet?* Christ makes a very fair offer to him in the next words, *Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven, and come and follow me*; thou shalt have Heaven for Earth, a Sea for a Drop, a Treasure for a Mite, a Crown for a Crumb. I, but the young mans affections were strongly engaged to the things of the World: And therefore he turns his back upon Christ, and goes away sorrowful, because he had great possessions. Oh! the madness and folly of this young man,

Mat. 19. 16, 24.

Multi à mundo res militas sunt miseri, habendo miseriores, Aug. in *Psal.* 26.

man, who to enjoy a little temporal felicity, had bid an everlasting farewel to Christ and Glory; in that of Gen. 13. 2. it is said that *Abraham* was very rich in Cattle, in Silver, and in Gold; the Hebrew word (*Cabeth*) that is here rendred *Rich*, signifies heavy, it signifies a burthen, to show us, that riches are a heavy burthen; and an hinderance many times to Heaven and Happiness; and this young Man in the Gospel found it so to his eternal undoing. Though the Lead-stone cannot draw the Iron when the Diamond is in presence, yet earthly possessions did draw this young mans Soul away, when Christ the Pearl of price was present; the World is a silken Net, and this young Man found it so; the World is like golden Fetters, and this young man found it so; the World is like sweet poyson, and this young man found it so; for he had drunk so large a draught of it, that there was no room in his

They say *dulce venenum*, a sweet poyson. *Bern.*

soul for Christ or Heaven, for Grace or Glory. Some say, that when the Serpent *Scytale* cannot overtake the flying Passengers, she doth with her beautiful colours, so astonish and amaze them, that they have no power to pass away till she have stung them: such a Serpent this World proved to the young man in the Gospel, it did so affect him and take him, so amaze him and amuse him, that he could not stir till it stung him to death.

If Money were thrown to the Dogs, they would not so much as smell at it; the greater is their folly and madness, that will go to Hell Gates for it.

When the Moon is fullest, it is furthest from the Sun, so the more men have of the World, the further (commonly) they are from God; and this the young man in the Gospel made good.

Many have ventured life and limb, and many a better thing, to gain the things of this World, and yet after all, they have got nothing at all. *Achans* Golden Wedge, proved a Wedge to cleave him; and his Garment a Garment to shrowd him.

The whole World is circular, the

heart

heart of a man is triangular, and we know a circle cannot fill a triangle; yea, if it be not filled with the three Persons in Trinity, it will be filled with the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. The World may be resembled to the Fruit that undid us all, which was fair to the sight, smooth in handling, sweet in taste, but deadly in effect and operation.

Ah! Young Men, Young Men, have none of you found it so?

The World in all its bravery is no better than the Cities which *Solomon* gave to *Hiram*, which he called *Cabul*, that is to say, *displeasing*, or dirty; the World will afford nothing but trivial Flowers, surrounded with many Bryers: O the vanity, the uncertainty, the imperfection of all things below! If a man should weigh his pay and his pains together, his miseries and his pleasures together, his joys and his sorrows together, his mer-

1 King. 9. 13.

cies, and his crosses together, his good days, and his bad days together, will he not conclude, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity?*

In my other Treatises, you may read more of the vanity, insufficiency, impotency, mutability, uncertainty, and inconstancy of the World, and to them I refer you.

It was a wise and Christian Speech of *Charles* the Fifth, to the Duke of *Venice*, who when he had shewed him the glory of his Princely Palace, and earthly Paradise, instead of admiring it, or him for it, only returned him this grave and serious *memento*, (*Hæc sunt quæ faciunt invitos mori,*) These are the things which make us unwilling to dye; it was a good saying of one to a great Lord (upon his shewing him his stately House, and pleasant Gardens;) Sir, you had need make sure of Heaven, or else when you dye, you will be a very great loser.

Ah! Young men, Young men, 'tis only Heaven that is above all winds, storms, and tempests; not hath God cast man out of Paradise, for

for him to think to find out another Paradise in this World; the main reason, why many young men dote upon the World, is, because they are not acquainted with a greater Glory: Men eat Acorns, till they were acquainted with the use of Wheat. The Woman had the Moon under her feet, when she was cloathed with the Sun, and had a Crown of twelve Stars upon her head. Rev. 12.

Ah! Young men; were you but Cloathed with the Sun of Righteousness, and had you a Crown set upon your heads, by the hand of Faith, you would have all the things of this World which are as low, bespotted, and mutable as the Moon, under your feet; well young men, as ever you would be good betimes, sit loose from the things of this World, be no longer worshippers of this golden Calf, and never let the World, that should be but your servant, become your Lord; Oh! let not the Devil and the World, Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26, 27, 35. ch. 10, 31.

have more service for an ounce of Gold, than Christ shall have for the Kingdom of Heaven!

Ah young men! the World and you must part, or Christ and you will never meet; *You cannot serve God and Mammon.* The two Poles shall sooner meet, than the love of Christ, and the love of the World.

Mat. 6. 14.

V. Direction.

Fifthly, *If you would be good betimes, if you would know, seek, and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your youth, then take heed betimes of carnal Reason, take heed of consulting with flesh and blood.*

Gal. 1. 15, 16. Cicero a Heathen, could say, that man would not be so wicked, and do so wickedly, were it not for his reason.

Many a hopeful young man hath been undone temporally, and undone eternally, by hearkening to those evil Counsellors.

Carnal Reason is an enemy, yea, an utter enemy; nay, it is not only an utter enemy, but it is enmity, yea, enmities, *Rom.* 8. 7. An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity can never

ver be reconciled. Carnal Reason is not only averse, but it is utterly averse to all goodness; it builds strong holds and syllogisms against the most glorious Gospel Truths, and accounts the precious things of Christ as a strange thing; carnal Reason will make God and Gospel do homage to it, when carnal Reason is in the Throne, Christ and his truths must all bow, or be judged before its Bar.

And Young men, young men, as ever you would be good betimes, stop your ears against all carnal Reasonings within you; carnal Reason judges the choicest things of the Gospel to be meer foolishness, it is purblind, and cannot see how to make a right judgments of Christ, his Word, his ways, and yet will controll all. 1 Cor. 1, 2.

If you are resolved to be still Scholars to this Master, then you must resolve to be unhappy here, and miserable hereafter. But,

It is safer and better for you to imitate those young men, who in the morning of their days have graciously, wisely, and resolutely withstood those evil Counsellers, Carnal Reason, Flesh and Blood; *Joseph*, and *Moses*, *Daniel*, *Shadrack*, *Meshack*, *Abednego*, all these in the Primrose of their youth, were good at turning the deaf ear to carnal Counsel, and carnal Counsellors.

Gen. 39. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, &c, Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26. Dan. 1.

Cassianus reports of a young man that had given himself up to a Christian life, and his Parents misliking that way, they wrote letters to him to perswade him from it; and when he knew that there were letters come from them, he would not open them, but threw them into the fire: this example is worth following.

Another famous Example you have in the story of King *Edward* the sixth, when *Grammar* and *Ridley* came to him, and were very earnest to have him give way to his Sister, the Lady *Mary* to

have

have Mass; he stood out, and pleaded the case with them, that it was a sin against God, and provoking to the eyes of his Glory, &c. But they still continued to use many Carnal Arguments to perswade the King (who was but a Child, about fifteen years of Age) but he withstood them a great while; but at length, when he saw that he could not prevail (with all his pleading) against those grave men, but that they still continued their suit, he burst out in bitter weeping and sobbing, desiring them to desist; the Motioners seeing his zeal and constancy, wept as fast as he, and being overcome, they went away, and told one, that the King had more Divinity in his little finger, than they had in all their bodies.

Ah! young men, it will be your safety, and your glory, to write after this Princely Copy, when you are surrounded with carnal Reason and carnal Counsellors, &c.

VI. D.

VI. Direction.

Sixthly and Lastly, *If you would be good betimes, then take heed of comparing your selves with those that are worse than your selves.*

John 9. 39, 40.

Young men are very apt to compare themselves with those that are worse than themselves, and this proves a snare unto them, yea, oftentimes their bane, their ruine. As it did the young Pharisee in the Gospel, who pleaded his negative Righteousness: He was not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, and stood on his comparative Goodness, nor as this Publican; he stands not only upon his Comparisons, but upon his Disparisons; being blind at home, and too quick-sighted abroad, he contemneth, and condemneth the poor Publican, who was better than himself, making good that saying of *Seneca*, The nature of man (saith he) is very apt (*Vitiut perspicilliis magis quam speculis*,) to use Spectacles to behold

Luk. 18. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Thales*, one of the seven Sages, being asked what was the easiest thing in the world to do: answered, to know other mens faults, and none of our own.

hold other mens faults, rather than Looking-glasses to behold our own; such Pharisees do justly incur the censure which that sowre Philosopher pass'd upon Gramarians, *That they were better acquainted with the evils of* Ulysses, *than with their own.*

Diogenes apud Laertium. lib. 6.

Ah! Young men, young men, you know he that drinks poyson, though he drinks not so much as another, and he that commits Treason, though not so great, so high Treason as another, shall yet as certainly be poysoned, and hanged, as he that hath drunk a greater quantity of poyson, and committed higher acts of Treason.

Mat. 11. 22, 23, 24, 25. As in Heaven one is more Glorious than another, so in Hell one shall be more miserable than another. *Aug.*

Sirs, do not delude and befool your own Souls, if you are not as wicked as others, you shall not be as much tormented as others, but yet you shall be as certainly damned as others, you shall as certainly go to Hell as others, you shall as sure be shut out for ever from God, Christ, Saints, Angels, and all the Treasures, Plea-

pleasures and glories of Heaven, as others, except it be prevented, by timely Repentance on your side, and pardoning mercy on Gods.

Wilt thou count it madness, O young man! in him that is sick, to reason thus; I am not so sick as such and such, and therefore I will not send to the Physician? and in the wounded man to say, I am not so desperately wounded as such and such, and therefore I will not send to the Chirurgion? And in the Traytor to say, I am not guilty of so many foul and hainous treasons as such and such, and therefore I will not look after a Pardon? and in the necessitous man to say I am not so hard put to it as such and such, and therefore I will not welcome a hand of Charity? And wilt not thou count it the greatest madness in the World, for thee to put off thy Repentance, and thy returning to the Lord in the spring and morning of thy youth, because that thou art not as sinful,

as

as wicked, as such and such? If to have a softer bed, and milder punishment in Hell than others, will satisfie thee, then go on; but if thou art afraid of the Worm that never dyes, and of the fire that never goes out; but like that stone in *Arcadia*, which being once kindled could not be quenched; O then begin to be good betimes; O seek and serve the Lord in the Spring and Morning of your days.

To think often of Hell is the way to be preserved from falling into Hell. Ah! young men, young men, that you would often consider the bitterness of the Damneds Torments, and of the pitilessness of their Torments, and of the diversity of their Torments, and of the easelessness of their Torments, and of the remedilessness of their Torments, (*Momentaneum est quod delectat, Æternum quod cruciat.*) The Sinners delight here is momentany, that which torments hereafter is perpetual; when as Sinners

Chrysost. Hom. 44. in *Mat.*

Sinner is in Hell, dost thou think O young man! that another Christ shall be found to die for him, or that the same Christ will be Crucified again for him, or that another Gospel should be preached to him? Surely no.

Ah! Why then wilt thou not betimes return and seek out after the things that belong to thy everlasting peace? I have read of Pope *Clement* the Fifth, that when a young Nephew of his dyed, he sent his Chaplain to a Necromancer, to know of him how it fared with him in the other World; the Conjurer shewed him to the Chaplain, lying in a fiery bed in Hell, which when the Pope understood, he never joyed more, &c.

Jac. Rev. Hist. Pont. Rom. 119.

Ah Young Man, that these occasional sights of Hell may be a means to preserve thee from lying in those everlasting flames.

Bellarmine tells us of a certain Advocate of the Court of *Rome*, that

that being at the point of Death, was ſtirred up by them that ſtood by to repent, and call upon God for Mercy? he with a conſtant countenance, and without ſign of fear, turned his ſpeech to God and ſaid, *Lord, I have a deſire to ſpeak unto thee, not for my ſelf, but for my Wife and Children, for I am haſtening to Hell, neither is there any thing that thou ſhouldeſt do for me.* And this he ſpake, ſaith *Bellarmine*, (who was preſent and heard it) as if he had ſpoken of a Journey to ſome Village or Town, and was no more affrighted.

Bellar. de Arte moriendi, l. 2. c. 10.

Sir *Francis Bacon* alſo in his Hiſtory of *Henry* the ſeventh, relates, how it was a common by-word of the Lord *Cordes*, *That he would be content to lie ſeven years in Hell, ſo he might win* Calis *from the* Engliſh. But if thou, O young man, art given up to ſuch deſperate Atheiſm, and carnal Apprehenſions of Hell, I am afraid God will confute thee one day by Fire and Brimſtone; but I would willingly hope

hope better things of all those young persons into whose hands this Treatise shall fall. And thus you see what things must be declined and avoided, if ever you would be good betimes, if ever you would seek and serve the Lord in the Spring and Morning of your days.

CHAP. VII.

BUT in the second place, *as those things must be declined, so other things must be carefully and diligently practised, if ever you would be good betimes.* I shall instance only in those that are most considerable and weighty: As,

First, *If ever you would be good betimes, &c. then you must labour to be acquainted with four things betimes.*

I. Duty.

First, *You must labour to acquaint your selves with the Scriptures betimes,* you must study the Word betimes; *David* studied the Word in

in the morning of his days, in the Primrose of his youth, and this made him wiser than his Enemies, yea, than his teachers; this made him as much excel the Ancients, as the Sun excels the Moon, or as the Moon excels the twinklings Stars. *Timothy* was good betimes, and no wonder; for in the Primrose of his days, he was acquainted with the Scripture, he was inured to the Word from his childhood, yea, from his Infancy; as the Word properly signifies; see in that 119. *Psalm* the 9. verse, *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed according to thy Word.* There is no way to a holy heart, and a clean life, but by acquainting of your selves with the Word betimes. One hath long since observed, That God hath bowed down the Scriptures to the capacity even of Babes and Sucklings, that all excuse may be taken away, and that Young Men may be encouraged to study the Scrip-

Psal. 119. 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103.

2 Tim. 3 15.

ἀπὸ βρέφους, from a suckling.

Aug.

Hier. Epist. Adore plenitudinem Scripturarum. Tert.

Scripture betimes. Ah! Young men, no Histories are comparable to the Histories of the Scripture: 1. For Antiquity. 2. Rarity. 3. Variety. 4. Brevity. 5. Perspicuity. 6. Harmony. 7. Verity. All other Books cannot equal Gods, either in Age, or Authority, in Dignity, or Excellency, in Sufficiency, or Glory.

Moses is found more ancient and more honourable than all those whom the *Grecians* make most ancient and honourable, as *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and *Jupiter* himself, whom the *Greeks* have seated in the top of their Divinity.

Gregory calls the Scripture (*Cor & animam Dei*) the Heart and Soul of God.

The whole Scripture is but one entire Love-letter, dispatcht from the Lord Christ to his Beloved Spouse, and who then but would still be a reading in this Love-letter? Like *Cecilia* a *Roman* Maiden of Noble Parentage, who carried always about her the new Testament, that she might still be

a

a reading in Christs Love-Letter, and behold the sweet workings of his Love, and Heart, toward his dear and precious ones.

Luther found so much sweetness in the Word, in Christs Love-Letter, that made him say, he would not live in Paradise if he might, without the Word, (*At cum verbo etiam in inferno facile est vivere,*) but with the Word he could live in Hell it self.

The Word is like the stone *Garamantitus*, that hath drops of Gold in it self, enriching of the believing Soul. This the Martyrs found, which made them willing to give a load of hay, for a few leaves of the Bible in *English*.

St. *Augustine* professeth, that the Sacred Scriptures were his whole delight.

And St. *Hierom* tells (us) of one *Nepotianus*, who by long and assiduous Meditation on the Holy Scriptures, had made his Breast the Library of Jesus Christ.

Hier Epist. ad Hesiod. in Epitaph. Nepotiani.

And

and *Rabbi Chii*, in the *Jerusalem Talmud* saith, That in his account all the World is not of equal value with one word out of the Law. That which a Papist reports lyingly of their Sacrament of the Mass, viz. that there are as many mysteries in it, as there be drops in the Sea, dust on the Earth, Angels in Heaven, Stars in the Sky, Atoms in the Sun-beams, or Sands on the Sea-shore, &c. may be truly asserted of the Holy Scriptures.

Oh the Mysteries, the Excellencies, the Glories, that are in the Word! Ah! no Book to this Book, none so useful, none so needful, none so delightful, none so necessary to make you happy, and to keep you happy, as this. It is said of *Cæsar*, (*Majus fuit curia Cæsari libellorum quam purpuræ*,) That he had greater care of his Books, than of his Royal Robes; for swimming thorow the Waters to escape his Enemies, he carried his Book in his Hand above the Waters

waters, but lost his Robes; now what are Geſare Books to Gods Books?

Ah! Young men, young men, the Word of the Lord is a Light to guide you; a Counſellour to counſel you, a Comforter to comfort you, a Staff to ſupport you, a Sword to defend you, and a Phyſician to cure you; the Word is a Mine to enrich you, a Robe to cloath you, and a Crown to Crown you, it is Bread to ſtrengthen you, and Wine to cheer you, and a Honey-comb to feaſt you, and Muſick to delight you, and a Paradiſe to entertain you. Pſal. 119.

Oh! therefore before all, and above all, ſearch the Scripture, ſtudy the Scripture, dwell on the Scripture, delight in the Scripture, treaſure up the Scripture; no Wiſdom, to Scripture Wiſdom; no Knowledge, to Scripture Knowledge; no Experience, to Scripture Experience; no Comforts to Scripture Comforts; no De-

The Jewiſh Rabbins were wont to ſay, that upon every letter of the Law, there hangs Mountains of profitable matter.

Delights to Scripture delights, no Convictions to Scripture convictions, nor no conversion to Scripture conversion.

Tolle & Lege.

St. *Augustine* hearing a voice from Heaven, that bad him *Take and Read*; thereupon turning open the New Testament, he fell upon that place, *Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.* This Scripture so sunk into his heart as that it proved the means of his Conversion, as himself reports. This St. *Augustine*, as he was once preaching, his memory failing of him contrary to his purpose, he fell upon reproving the *Manichæans*, and by a Scripture or two not before thought of, to confute their Heresies, he converted *Firmus* a *Manichean*, as he after acknowledged to *Augustine*, blessing God for that Sermon.

Rom. 13. 13, 14

Lib. 8. Confess. c. 11. Possidon. de vita Aug.

If

It is reported of one *Adrianus*, who seeing the Martyrs suffer such grievous things in the Cause of God, he asked, What was that which caused them to suffer such things? and one of them named that Text, *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* And this Text was set home with such a power upon him, as that it converted him, and made him to profess Religion, and not only to profess it, but to die a Martyr for it. 1 Cor. 2. 9.

Cyprian was converted by reading the Prophesie of *Jonah*. *Junius* was converted by reading the first Chapter of *John* the Evangelist.

I have read of a Scandalous Minister, that was struck at the Heart, and converted in reading that Scripture, *Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thy self*, &c. Rom. 2. 21.

We read that *Paphnutius* converted *Thais* and *Ephron*, two famous

mous Strumpets from uncleanness, only with the Scripture Argument, Heb. 4. 13. *That God seeth all things in the dark, when the doors are fast, the windows shut, and the curtains drawn.*

I have read of a poor man, who perswaded a young Scholar to leave reading of Poetry, &c. And fall upon reading of the Scripture, which accordingly he did; and it pleased the Lord, before he had read out *Genesis*, to change his heart, and to turn him to the Lord in the Primrose of his days, he being then but twenty years of age.

Origen was her Schoolmaster.

I have read of a young Lady, called *Potamia*, of a very illustrious Family, who endured very much in her Martyrdom by the extream cruelty of *Basilides* her Executioner; yet after her death, he bethinking himself of the holy words and Scripture expressions that were uttered by her, during her cruel torments, became a Christian and within a few days after

was

was himself likewise crowned with Martyrdom.

James Andreas, a Godly Minister, hearing of a *Jew*, that for Theft was hanged by the Heels, with his Head downward, having not seen that kind of punishment, he went to the place, where he was hanging between two Dogs, that were always snatching at him, to eat his flesh. The poor wretch repeated in Hebrew some Verses of the *Psalms*, wherein he cryed unto God for mercy; whereupon *Andreas* went near to him, and instructed him in the Principles of Christian Religion, about Christ the *Messiah*, *&c.* Exhorting him to believe in him; and it pleased God so to bless his Scripture exhortations to him, that the Dogs gave over tearing of his flesh, and the poor *Jew* desired him to procure, that he might be taken down, and baptized, and hung by the Neck, for the quicker dis-

A Miracle of Mercy.

parch, which was done accordingly,

I might produce other Instances, but let these suffice, to provoke all young Persons to a speedy, serious, diligent and constant study of the Scripture. Ah Sirs! you do not know how soon your blind minds may be enlightened, your hard Hearts softned, and your proud Spirits humbled, your sinful Natures changed, your defiled Consciences purged, your distempered affections regulated, and your poor Souls saved, by searching into the Scripture, by reading the Scripture, and by pondering upon the Scripture; you should lay up the Manna of God's Word in your Hearts, as *Moses* laid up the Manna in the *Golden* Pot, and as *Tamar* did with the Staff and the Signet that she received from *Judah*, she laid them up till she came to save her life, and did save her life by it, as you may see in holy story.

Much in the Word is wrapp'd up in a little.

It is more to be admired, than to have *Homer's Iliads* comprised in a Nutshel.

Heb. 9. 4.

Gen. 38. 18, 25.

The

The laying up the Word *Now*, may be the saving of your Souls another day.

I have read of little Bees, that when they go out in stormy weather, they will carry a little of their comb or Gravel with them, that they may be ballanced, and not carried away with the Wind.

Ah! Young Men, Young Men, you had need to have your thoughts and hearts ballanced with the precious Word, that you may not be carried away with every Wind of Doctrine, as many have been in these days, to their destruction and confusion.

Narcissus, a beautiful Youth, though he would not love them that loved him, yet afterwards fell in love with his own shadow; Ah! How many Young men in these days, who were once lovely and hopeful, are now fall'n in love with their own and others shadows, with high, empty, airy Notions, and with strange, monstrous speculations, to their own damnation? 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11, 12.

Holy *Melancthon*, being newly converted, thought it impossible for his Hearers to withstand the evidence of the Gospel, but soon after he complained that old *Adam* was too hard for young *Melancthon*.

Ah! Young men, young men, if you do not in good earnest give up your selves to the reading, to the studying, to the pondering, to the believing, to the affecting, to the applying, and to the living up to the Scripture, Satan will be too hard for you, the World will be too hard for you, your Lusts will be too hard for you, Temptations will be too hard for you, and Deceivers will be too hard for you, and in the end you will be miserable: And thus much for the first thing, *&c.*

2. Duty.

Secondly, *If you would be good betimes, then you must acquaint your*

your ſelves with your ſelves betimes. If you would be gracious in the Spring and morning of your days, then you muſt ſee betimes how bad you are, how vile, how ſinful, how wretched you are; no man begins to be good till he ſees himſelf to be bad; the young Prodigal never began to amend, he never thought of returning to his Father till he came to himſelf, till he began to return to his own Soul, and ſaw himſelf in an undone Condition. Luk. 15. 21, 22.

Ah! Young men, Young men, you muſt ſee your ſelves to be *Children of Wrath, to be Enemies, to be Strangers, to be be afar off from God, from Chriſt, from the Covenant, from Heaven, to be Sins Servants, and Satans Bond-ſlaves*; the ready way to be found, is to ſee your ſelves loſt; the firſt ſtep to mercy, is to ſee your miſery; the firſt ſtep towards *Heaven*, is to ſee your ſelves near to *Hell*: you will not look af- Eph. 2. 1, 2, 3, 12, 13. Rom. 6. 16. John 8. 44. 2 Tim. 2. 26.

after the Physician of Souls, you will not prize the Physician of Souls, you will not desire the Physician of Souls, you will not match with the Physician of Souls, you will not fall in love, in league with the Physician of Souls, you will not resign up your selves to the Physician of Souls, till you come to see your Wounds, till you come to feel your Diseases, till you see the Tokens, the Plague-sores of Divine Wrath and Displeasure upon you; as the whole do not need the Physician, so they do not desire, they do not care for the Physician.

Austin saith, he would willingly go thorow Hell to Christ; so will all that see their need of Christ.

Ah! Young Men, as you would be good betimes, begin to acquaint your selves with your sinful selves betimes, begin to acquaint your selves betimes with your Natural and undone Condition.

Zanchy writ Tractate *Quod nihil scitur.*

There is a threefold self.

1. There is a Natural Self, as a mans Parts, Wit, Reason, Affe-

Affections, and Inclinations, &c.

2. A Religious Self, and so a Man's Duties, Graces, Obedience, Righteousness, Holiness, are called ones self.

There is a Sinful Self, and so a Man's Corruptions, Lusts, sinful Nature and Dispositions, are called ones self; now if ever you would be good betimes, you must acquaint your selves with your sinful self betimes.

Luther said, that if a man could perfectly see his own faults, the sight there of would be a very Hell unto him.

Demonicus being asked at what time he began to be a Philosopher: Answered, *When I began to know my self.* So a Man never begins to be a Christian, till he begins to know himself. And indeed for a man to know himself, to acquaint himself with himself, is one of the hardest works in all the World. For as the eye can see all things but it self; so most can discern all faults but their own. *Henry* the fourth Emperor of *Germany* his usual speech was, *Multi multa*

sciunt, se autem nemo; many know much, but few know themselves.

The very Heathens did admire that saying as an Oracle, (*Nosce teipsum,*) Know, and be acquainted with thy own self. The main exhortation of *Chilo*, one of the seven Sages, was, *Know thy self*. And *Plato* recordeth, that this saying of *Chilo*, *Know thy self*, was written in Letters of *Gold* upon the Portal of *Appollo*'s Temple.

Juvenal saith, that this saying, *Know thy self*, came from Heaven. *Macrobius* saith; That the Oracle of *Apollo* being demanded what course should be taken for attaining to Felicity, answered, *Only teach a man to know himself.*

Thus you see, that both Divinity and Philosophy do agree in this, *That the best and surest way to true felicity, is to know our selves*, to acquaint our selves with ourselves.

This

This Duty the Apostle charges upon the *Ephesians*, *Remember that you being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, that at that time you were without Christ, aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenant of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the World.*

Here are five withouts, *Without Christ, without the Church, without the Promise, without hope, and without God in the World.*

Man in his natural state is afar off, (he is without) three manner of ways.

1. In point of Opinion and Apprehension.

2. In point of Fellowship and Communion.

3. In point of Grace and Conversion.

As you would be good betimes, dwell much upon your corrupt nature betimes. Ah! such is the corruption of our Nature, that propound any divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water, or wet

Eph. 2. 11, 12.

Of dull and insensible men, one long since thus complained (*Patientius ferre Christi jacturam, quam suam*) that they did more calmly pass by the injuries done to Christ, than those that were done unto themselves. O the Plague of unsensibleness!

wet wood with hissing; propound any evil, then it is like fire to straw, it is like the foolish Satyr, that made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter which the Naturalists say, sucks and snatches the fire to it, with which it is consumed: Till you come to be sensible of this, you will never begin to be good, you will never look to have your Hearts changed, and your Souls saved.

The *Æthiopians* paint Angels black, and Devils white, in favour of their own complexion, and they say, that if the bruit Creatures could draw a Picture of the Divine Nature, they would make their shape the Copy; and thus they flatter and delude themselves; take heed, young Men, take heed that you do not put the like cheats upon your own Souls; take heed that you be not like those Limners who so as they can make a man's Picture gay and gaudy, care not to draw it so as

to

to resemble him. It is safest and best, O young man! to know the worst of thy self, and to know thy self as thou art in thy self, and not as thy own Flattering Heart, or as other Flatterers may represent thee to thy self.

3. Duty.

Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, then *you must acquaint your selves with Jesus Christ betimes.*

You must know him betimes; A man never begins to be good, till he begins to know him that is the Fountain of all goodness; *This is Life Eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Joh. 17.3.

The knowledge of Christ is the beginning of eternal Life, it is the way to Eternal life, it is a taste of eternal life, it is a sure pledge and pawn to the Soul of eternal Life.

The *Spaniards* say of *Aquinas*, That he that knows not him, knows not any thing; but he tha

that knows him, knows all things; he that knows Jesus Christ, not notionally only, but practically, not apprehensively only, but effectively; he knows all things that may make him happy: But he that knows not Jesus Christ, knows nothing that will stand him in stead, when he shall lie upon a dying Bed, and stand before a Judgment Seat.

Justin Martyr relates that when in his discourse with *Trypho*, he mentioned the knowledge of Christ, as conducing to our happiness and perfection: *Trypho*'s friends laughed at it; but I hope better things of those into whose hands this Treatise shall fall.

Sirs, The Sun is not more necessary to the World, the Eye to the Body, the Pilot to the Ship, the General to the Army, &c. than the knowledge of Christ betimes is necessary for all those that would be good betimes.

Dear Hearts, as ever you would be good betimes, *you must labour*, even

even as for life, *to know, and be thoroughly acquainted with these six things*, concerning Jesus Christ betimes.

First, If you would be good betimes, *Then you must know betimes, that there is every thing in Christ that may encourage you to seek him, and serve him, to love him, and obey him, to believe on him, and to marry with him.*

Nec Christus, nec. Cœlum patitur hyperbolem.

If you look upon his Names, his Natures, his Offices, his Graces, his Dignities, his Excellencies, his Royalties, his Glories, his Fulnesses, they all speak out as much.

Are you poor? Why, Christ hath tried Gold to enrich you. Are you naked? Christ hath white Rayment to cloath you. Are you spiritually blind? Christ hath eye-salve to enlighten you. Are you in straits? he hath wisdom to counsel you. Are you unrighteous? he will be righteousness to you. Are you unholy? he will be holiness and sanctification to you. Are you hungry?

Rev. 3. 18.

1 Cor. 1. 30.

gry? he is Bread to feed you. Are you thirsty? he is Wine and Milk, to satisfie you. Are you weary? he is a Bed, a seat to rest you. Are you sick? Why, he is a Physician to cure you, &c. (*Omne bonum in summo bono,*) all good is in th chiefest good.

Joh. 6. 43. Isa. 55. 1. Mat. 11. 28. Mat. 9. 12.

The Creatures have their particular goodness, Health hath its particular goodness, and Wealth hath its particular goodness, and Learning hath its, and the Favour of the Creature hath its, &c. But now Jesus Christ he is an Universal good; all the petty excellencies that are scattered abroad in the Creatures, are united in Christ; yea, all the whole Volume of Perfections which is spread through Heaven and Earth, is epitomized in him: *Ipse unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono bona sunt omnia,* Aug. One Christ will be to thee in stead of all things else, because in him are all good things to be found. *Abraham's* Servant brought forth Jewels of Silver, and Jewels of Gold,

Christ is the *Bonum in quo omnia bona.*

to

to win *Rebecaah*'s heart to *Isaac*: so should you, O young Men, be often in presenting to your own view, all those amiable and excellent things that be in Christ, to win your Hearts over to Christ betimes. Gen 24.53.

Secondly, If you would be good betimes, *Then you must know betimes, that Jesus Christ is mighty to save.*

He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto him, that believe in him, and that cast themselves upon him. The Lord hath laid help upon one that is mighty. Christ saves perfectly, thorowly, perpetually them that come unto him. Heb. 7. 25, εἰς τὸ παντελὲς, Perpetually, constantly. *Mat.* 9. 28. *Isa.* 63. 1. Mighty to save.

The three Tongues that were written upon the Cross in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, to witness Christ to be the King of the *Jews*, do each of them in their several Idioms avouch this Axiom, that Christ is an All-sufficient Saviour! and a three-

fold

fold cord is not easily broken, They say, it is true of the Oyl at *Rhemes*, that though it be continually spent in the Auguration of their Kings of *France*, yet it never wasteth. Christ is that pot of Manna, that Cruise of Oyl, that bottomless Occean, that never fails his People; There is in Christ an All-sufficiency for all Creatures, at all times, in all places.

Christ is never *vacuis manibus*, empty handed.

The great *Cham* is said to have a Tree full of Pearls hanging by Clusters; but what is the great *Cham*'s Tree to Christ our Tree of Life, who hath all variety and plenty of all fruit upon him? The happinesses that come to Believers by Christ, are so many, that they cannot be numbred, so great that they cannot be measured; so copious, that they cannot be defined; so precious, that they cannot be valued; all which speaks out the fulness and All-sufficiency of Christ.

Rev. 22.22. Christ is like the Trees of the Sanctuary, which were both for meat, and for medicine. *Ezek.* 42. 12.

There is in Christ (*plenitudo abun-*

abundantiæ, & plenitudo redundantiæ,) a fulneſs of abundance, and a fulneſs of redundancy as well as a fulneſs of ſufficiency.

There is in Chriſt.

1. The Fulneſs of the Spirit.
2. The Fulneſs of Grace.
3. The Fulneſs of the Image of God.
4. The Fulneſs of the God-head.
5. The Fulneſs of Glory.

But I muſt not now open nor dilate on theſe things, leſt I ſhould tire both my ſelf and the Reader.

Plutarch in the Life of *Phocion*, tells us of a certain Gentlewoman of *Iunia*, who ſhewed the Wife of *Phocion* all the rich Jewels and precious ſtones ſhe had; ſhe anſwered her again, All my Riches and Jewels is my Husband *Phocion*; ſo may a penitent Sinner ſay of his bleſſed Saviour, Chriſt is all my Jewels, my Riches, my Treaſures, my Pleaſures, *&c.* His Sufficiency is all theſe, and more

more than these to me.

The *Spanish* Ambassador comming to see the Treasury of Saint *Mark* in *Venice*, which is cryed up throughout the World, fell a groping to find whether it had any bottom, and being asked why; answered, In this, amongst other things, my great Masters Treasure differs from yours, in that his hath no bottom as I find yours to have; alluding to the Mines in *Mexico* and *Potosi*: But what are the *Spaniard*'s Treasures to Christ's Treasures? a man may without much groping find the bottom of all earthly Treasures, but who can find the bottom of Christ's Treasuries? Should all created excellencies meet in one glorified Breast, yet they could not enable that glorious God-like Creature to sound the bottom of those Riches and Treasures which are in Christ, *Ephes.* 3. 8. All which speaks out Christ's All-sufficiency. And thus much for the second thing.

Ipse Deus sufficit ad præmium. Bern.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, *Then you must know betimes that there is a marvellous willingness and readiness in Christ, to embrace, to entertain, to welcome returning Sinners, and to shew mercy and favour to them.*

The young Prodigal did but think of returning to his Father, and he ran and met him, and instead of kicking or killing him, he kissed him, and embraced him, his Bowels rolled within him, and his compassions flowed out freely to him. *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come buy Wine and Milk, without money and without price.* *Nazianzen* improveth this place thus: Oh this easie way of Contract! He giveth more willingly than others sell; if thou wilt but accept, that is all the price: Though you have no merits, though you have nothing in your selves to encourage you, yet will you accept? If you

Luk. 15. 20, 21, 22.

Isa. 55. 1.

The meaning is, sell thy self, thine own wit, reason, self-worth, and that is all Christ desires, said *Augustine* upon the words.

you will, all is freely yours, the waters shall be yours to cleanse you, and the Milk yours to nourish you, and the bread yours to strengthen you, and the Wine yours to comfort you; here poor sinners are called three times to come; Come, saith Christ, come, come, to shew how marvellous ready and willing he is, that poor Sinners should taste of Gospel delicats. So in that *John* 7. 37. *Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink.* So in that *Rev.* 22. 17. *Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the Water of life freely.* So in that, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* And so in that, *Luke* 14. 21. *The Master of the House said to his Servant, Go out quickly into the Streets and Lanes of the City, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the*

Cant. 2. 8. Christ comes leaping upon the Mountains, and skipping upon the Hills, to shew his readiness and willingness to do good to Souls.

the blind. Here is no man of Quality, of Dignity, of Worldly Pomp or Glory, or of any self-sufficiency, that is invited to the Feast, but a company of poor ragged, deformed, slighted, neglected, impoverished, wounded Sinners; these are invited to feast with Christ.

Concerning this willingness of Christ, I shall speak more when I come to deal with old Sinners in the close of this Discourse, and to to that I refer you for further and fuller satisfaction, concerning the great readiness and willingness of Jesus Christ to entertain returning Sinners.

Fourthly, If you would be good betimes *Then you must know betimes, that Jesus Christ is designed, sealed and appointed by the Father to the Office of a Mediator.*

Joh. 6 27. *The Father sealed,* even God, so *the Greek* hath it.

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son

Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed: God the Father hath made Christ's Commission authentical, as men do theirs by their Seal. It is a Metaphor, a *Simile* taken from them who give Commissions under Hand and Seal. God the Father hath given it under his Hand and Seal, that Jesus Christ is the only person that he hath appointed, and sealed, hallowed, and confirmed to the Office of our redemption. If Jesus Christ were never so able to save, or never so willing and ready to save poor Sinners, yet if he were not appointed, designed, and sealed for that work, the awakened Sinner would never look out after him, nor desire Union with him, nor Interest in him; and therefore it is of very great consequence to know that God the Father hath sent and sealed Christ to be a Saviour to his People; *Him hath God the Father sealed*; sealed by way of Destination, and sealed by way of

of qualification, ſealed by his Doctrine, ſealed by his Miracles, ſealed by his Baptiſm, ſealed by his Reſurrection, but above all, ſealed by his glorious Unction. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tydings unto the meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Priſon to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them Beauty for Aſhes, the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of praiſe for the Spirit of Heavineſs, that they might be called Trees of Righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.* Neither Saints, nor Angels are ſealed and appointed to the great work of Redemption, but the Lord Jeſus is; you ſhould always look upon the

Iſa. 61, 1, 2, 3. Luk. 4. 18. Chriſt was anointed of God,
1. By way of deſignation.
2. By way of qualification.
3. By way of inauguration.
This anointing was ordinarily uſed in the inſtalling men to Offices of any eminence.

Lord Jesus, as sealed and anointed to the Office of a Mediator, and accordingly plead with him.

Ah Lord! It is thy Office, as thou art a sealed and an anointed Saviour and Redeemer, to subdue my sins, to change my Nature, to sanctifie my Heart, to reform my Life, and to save my Soul; and therefore do it for thy Name's sake; O do it for thy Office sake, do it for thy Glories sake.

Psal. 45. 8. Acts 4. 27. *Thou art anointed with the Oyl of Gladness above thy fellows*; Thou hast a larger effusion of the Spirit upon thee than others. Thou art anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with Power after an extraordinary measure and manner; thou art indued with all Heroical Gifts and Excellencies, Plentifully, Abundantly, Transcendently; thou art sealed and predestinated, thou art invested into this Office of Mediatorship under the Father's hand

Acts 10. 8.

Joh. 1. 16. Joh. 3. 34.

and

and seal; and therefore whither should I go for Salvation, for Remission, for Redemption, for Grace, for Glory, but to thee?

Fifthly, If you would be good betimes, *then you must know betimes that there is no way to Salvation but by Jesus Christ.*

Neither is there Salvation in any other (speaking of Christ) *for there is none other Name under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we must be saved:* If ever you are saved, you must be saved by him, and him only, you must not look for another Saviour, nor you must not look for a Co-saviour, you must be saved wholly by Christ, and only by Christ, or you shall never be saved; you must cry out as *Lambert* did (when he was in the Fire, and lifted up his hands and fingers ends flaming,) *None but Christ, None but Christ.* When *Augustus Cæsar* desired the Senate to joyn two Consuls with him for the better Government of the State;

Acts 4. 12. ἐν ἄλλῳ, that is, by or through the Mediation of any other.

Acts and Mon.

Suetonius.

the Senate answered, That they held it as a diminution of his dignity, and a disparagement of their own judgment to joyn any with so incomparable a man as *Augustus*.

Ah Friends, it is a diminution of Christ's dignity, sufficiency, and glory, in the business of your salvation, to joyn any thing with the Lord Jesus, and it is the greatest disparagement in the World to your own Judgments, knowledge, prudence and wisdom, to yoke any with Christ in the work of Redemption, in the business of Salvation.

St. *Augustine* saith, that *Marcellina* hung Christ's Picture, and the Picture of *Pythagoras* together; many there are, not only in *Rome*, but in *England*, (yea, I am afraid in *London*) who joyn Christ and their works together, Christ and their Prayers together, Christ and their Teachers together, Christ and their Mournings together,

ther, Christ and their earnings together, Christ and their Arms together.

Ah! What a poor, what a weak, what an impotent, what an insufficient Saviour do these men make Jesus Christ to be? Except these men come off from these things, and come up only to Jesus Christ in the great business of Salvation, they will as certainly and as eternally perish (notwithstanding their hearing, knowing, and talking much of Christ,) as those that never heard of Jesus Christ.

In the old Testament God commands them not to wear a Garment of divers sorts, as of Woollen and Linnen together: *Neither shall a Garment mingled of Linnen and Woollen come upon thee,* Deut. 22. 11. *cb.* 29. *v.* 19.

The Law was figurative, and shews us, that in the case of our Justification, Acceptation, and Salvation; we are not to joyn our Works, our Services, with

Phil. 3. 9, 10. Rev. 19. 8. Gal. 3. 28. ch. 2. 16.

the righteousness of Christ; God abhorrs a linsie-woolsie Righteousness. And as by the Letter of this Law in the *Hebrews* account, one thread of Wooll in a Linnen Garment, or one Linnen thread in a Woollen Garment, made it unlawful, so the least manner of mixture in the business of Justification, makes all null and void: *And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of Works, then it is no more Grace; otherwise Work is no more Work*: He that shall mix his righteousness with Christ's, he that shall mix his puddle with Christ's purple Blood, his Rags with Christ's Royal Robe, his Copper with Christs Gold, his Water with Christs Wine, &c. is in the ready way to perish for ever.

Rom. 11. 6. Eph. 2, 5. Rom. 5. 15, 16, 18.

On Earth Kings love no Corrivals, Power is impatient of Participation. *Christ* will be *Alexander* or (*Nemo*) no body; he will

will be all in all in the business of Justification, or he will be nothing at all; we must say of Christ, as it was once said of *Cæsar*, (*Socium habet neminem,*) he may have a companion, &c. but he must not have a competitor.

1 Cor. 1. 30. Rom. 5. 19, 20.

Let us say of Christ as the Heathen once said of his petty Gods, (*contemna spiritulos istos Deos, modo Jovem propitium habeam,*) so long as he had his *Jupiter* to friend, he regarded them not; So, so long as we have our *Jesus* to friend, and his Righteousness and Blood to friend, we should contemn all other things, and abhorr the bringing of any thing into Competition with him; a real Christian cares not for any thing that hath not (*aliquid Christi,*) something of Christ in it. He that holds not wholly with Christ, doth very shamefully neglect Christ; *Aut totum mecum tene, aut totum omitte,* saith *Gregory Nazianzen.*

Eph. 3. 19, 20. Psal. 21. 15, 16, 19. compared.

Isa. 55. 2. Rom. 10. 3.

There is no other Name, no other Nature, no other Blood, no other Merits, no other Person to be justified and saved by, but Jesus Christ; you may run from Creature to Creature, and from Duty to Duty, and from Ordinance to Ordinance; and when you have wearied and tired out your selves in seeking ease and rest, satisfaction and remission, justification and salvation in one way and another, you will be forced after all to come to Christ, and to cry out, Ah! *None but Christ, none but Christ*; Ah! None to Christ, none to Christ; no work to Christ, no Duties, no Services to Christ's, no Prayers, no Tears to Christ's, no Righteousness, no Holiness to Christ's.

Well Friends, remember this, that all the tears in the World cannot wipe off (meritoriously) one sin, nor all the Grace and Holiness that is in Angels and Men, buy out the Pardon of the least transgression. All remission is only

ly by the blood of Christ.

Sixthly and lastly, If you would be good betimes, *Then you must know betimes, that the Heart of Jesus Christ is as much set upon Sinners now he is in Heaven, as ever it was when he was upon Earth.*

Christ is no less loving, less mindful, less desirous of Sinners eternal welfare now he is in Heaven, (in a far Country) than he was when he lived on Earth, witness his continuing the Ministry of Reconciliation among poor Sinners in all Ages; witness the constant Treaties, that by his Ambassadours and Spirit he still hath with poor Sinners about the things of their peace, the things of eternity, witness his continual knockings, his continual callings upon poor Sinners, by his Word, Rod, Spirit, to open, to repent, to lay hold on Mercy, and to be at Peace with him; witness his continual wooing of poor Sinners in the face of all neglects and put offs;

2 Cor. 5. 20.

Rev. 3. 20. Isa. 56. 12. Isa. 27. 5.

Cant. 5. 2, 3. Luk. 14.

in the face of all delaies and denials; in the face of all harsh entertainment and churlish answers; in the face of all gain-saying and carnal reasonings, in the face of all the scorn and contempt that wretched sinners put upon him; and witness that plain word, *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.* Christ is the same afore time, in time, and after time; he is unchangeable in his Essence, in his Promises, and in his Affections. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come.*

Prov. 6. 9. Mat. 22. 4, 23, 24.

Heb. 13. 8.

Rev. 1. 8. 11. ch. 21. 6. ch. 22. 13.

It was a custom among the *Turks*, to cry out every Morning from an high Tower, God always was, and always will be, and so salute their *Mahomet.*

The Phrase is taken from the Greek Letters, whereof *Alpha* is the first; and *Omega* the last: The first and last Letters of the Greek Alphabet is a Description of me, saith Christ, who am before all, and after all, who am above all, and in all, who am unchangeable in my self, and in my thoughts and good-will to poor Sinners. Therefore do not, poor Souls, entertain any

any hard thoughts concerning *Jesus Christ*, as if he was less mindful, less pitiful, and less merciful to poor Souls now he is in Heaven, than he was when his abode was in this World.

And thus I have gone over those six things that you must know concerning Christ betimes, if ever you would be good betimes. When Pope *Leo* lay upon his Death-bed, Cardinal *Bembus* citing a Text of Scripture to comfort him, he replyed, (*Apage has nugas de Christo,*) Away with these bawbles concerning Christ; but I hope better things of you, and do desire that you will say of all things (below this knowledge of Christ that I have opened to you) as that devout Pilgrim who travelling to *Jerusalem*, and by the way visiting many brave Cities, with their rare Monuments, and meeting with many friendly entertainments, would often say, *I must not stay here, this is not* Jerusalem. Ah! so do you, young men and

and women in the midst of all your Worldly delights and contents, cry out, *Oh! We must not stay here, this is not* Jerusalem; this is not that Knowledge of Christ that I must have, if ever I am happy here, and blessed hereafter.

4. Duty.

Fourthly and lastly, *If you would be good betimes, then you must acquaint your selves with those that are good betimes.*

If you would be gracious in the spring and morning of your youth, then you must begin betimes to be much in with them who are much in with Christ, who lie near his heart, and know much of his mind: *He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed*; or as the Hebrew hath it shall be *broken in pieces*, as when an Army is broken and routed by an Enemy. *Holech* from *Halech*, walking with the

Pro. 13. 20. רוֹעֶה Shall be broken, or shall be worse, from רָעַע to be taught

the wise, he shall be wise, for so the Original hath it; it is not talking with the wise, but walking with the wise, that will make you wise; it is not your commending and praising of the wise, but your walking with the wise, that will make you wise? it is not your taking a few turns with the wise, that will make you wise, but your walking with the wise, that will make you wise; there is no getting much good by them that are good, but by making them your ordinary and constant companions.

'Twas the saying of one, *As oft as I have been among wicked men I return home less a man than I was before.*

Ah Friends, you should do as *Joseph* in *Egypt*, of whom the Scripture saith, *Psal.* 105. 25. (according to the Hebrew Phrase,) That *he tied the Princes of* Pharaoh's *Court about his heart.*

If ever you would gain by the Saints, you must bind them upon your Souls, you must labour to have very near, close and intimate communion with them.

The *Jews* have a Proverb, *That*

two

two dry sticks put to a green one, will kindle it. The best way to be in a flame God-ward, Christ-ward, Heaven-ward, and Holiness-ward, is to be among the dry sticks, the kindled Coals, the Saints; for as live Coals kindle those that are dead, so lively Christians will heat and enliven those that are dead God-wards, Christ-wards, Heaven-wards, and Holiness-wards. Pro. 27. 17. *As Iron sharpeneth Iron, so doth the face of man his friend.*

Mens Wits, Parts and Gifts, and Industry, commonly grow more strong, vigorous and quick, by friendly conference and communion.

And as he that comes where sweet Spices and Oyntments are stirring, carries away a sweet savour with him; so he that converseth with those that are good, shall carry away that goodness and sweetness with him, that shall render him sweet, desirable and delectable to others.

Polemon

Polemon, that St. *Auguſtine* ſpeaks of, who was all for Wine and Play, *&c.* Became a brave man when he came acquainted with the Philoſophers School. So many young men that have been all for Wine and Women, for playing and Toying, for Vanity and Folly, have become brave men, precious men, by the company, counſel and example of thoſe who were gracious. Doctor *Taylor* the Martyr rejoyced that ever he came into Priſon, becauſe he came thither to have acquaintance with that Angel of God, *John Bradford*, (as he calls him;) ſo doubtleſs many young Perſons there be that have much cauſe to rejoice, and for ever to bleſs the Lord, that ever they came acquainted with ſuch and ſuch (who fear the Lord, and who walk in his ways) for the good that they have received by them.

Aug. Ep. 130.

Algerius an *Italian* Martyr, ſaid, *He had rather be in a Priſon with*

with *Cato*, than with *Cæsar* in the Senate-house.

Moses was of the same mind and metal. Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26, 27.

Ah! young Men, young Men, you were better be with the People of God, when they are in the lowest and most contemptible condition, than with the great (wicked) ones of the World, when they are all in their Royalty, and Glory; in the day of account you will find that they have made the best Market, who have rather chosen to keep company with *Lazarus*, though in his raggs, than they would (with others) keep company with *Dives*, though in Purple Robes.

Those that keep ill company are like those that walk in the Sun, who are tann'd insensibly.

Well, young men, remember this, cloaths and company, do oftentimes tell tales in a mute, but significant language.

Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee what thou art, saith the *Spanish* Proverb. *Cicero* (though a Heathen) had rather to have no Companion, than a bad one: The Lord grant, that this

this Heathen (and others among them, that were of the same mind with him) may never rise up in judgment against any of you into whose hands this Treatise may fall.

And thus I have dispatched those four things that you must be acquainted with betimes, (*viz.* the Scripture, your own Hearts and conditions, the Lord Jesus Christ, and those that fear him) if ever you would be good betimes.

Secondly, *If you would be good betimes*, if you would seek and serve the Lord in the Spring and morning of your days: *Then you must shun the occasions of Sin betimes.* A man will never begin to be good, till he begin to decline those occasions that have made him bad, 1 *Thes.* 5. 22. *Abstain from all Appearance of evil.*

You must shun and be shie of the very appearance of sin, of the very shews and shadows of sin. The word εἶδος, which is ordinarily rendred *appearances*, signifies *kind*,

We must shun (*quicquid fuit malè coloratum*) whatsoever looks but ill-favouredly, as *Bernard* hath it.

kind or sort, and so the meaning of the Apostle seems to be this, *Abstain from all sort, or the whole kind of evil*; from all that is truly so, be it never so small.

The least sin is dangerous; *Cæsar* was stabb'd with Bodkins, and many have been eaten up of Mice and Lice.

The least spark may consume the greatest House, the least leak may sink the greatest Ship, the least sin is enough to undo thy Soul, and therefore shun all the occasions that lead unto it.

Job 31. 1. Gen. 39. 10. *Job* made a Covenant with his eyes; *Joseph* would not be in the room where his Mistress was; and

Psal. 26. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *David* (when himself) would not sit with vain Persons. As long as there is fewel in our Hearts for a Temptation, we cannot be secure. He that hath Gun-powder about him, had need keep far enough off from sparkles; he that is either tender of his credit abroad, or comfort at home, had need shun, and be

shie

shie of the very shew and shadow of sin: he that would neither wound Conscience, nor Credit, God, nor Gospel, had need hate the Garment spotted with the flesh.

Jude 23. The sin, and the coat of the sin is to be hated, saith *Ambros.*

In the Law God commanded his people, not only that they should worship no Idol, but that they should demolish all the Monuments of them, and that they should make no Covenant nor Affinity with those who worshipped them; and all, left they should be drawn by these occasions to committ Idolatry with them; he that would not taste of the forbidden fruit, must not so much as gaze at it, and he that would not be bit by the Serpent, must not so much as parley with the Serpent.

Latit Anguis in herba, Snakes are found amongst roses. Numb. 6. 2, 4. *Quid est vitare peccata, nisi vitare occasiones peccatorum?* Melanct.

It is very observable, That in the Law, the *Nazarite* was not only commanded to abstain from Wine and strong drink, but also he might not eat Grapes, whether moist or dry, or any thing that

What is it to avoid sin, but to avoid the occasions of sin?

that is made of the Vine-Tree; from the Kernels, even to the Husk; but why not these small things, in which there could be no danger of Drunkenness? surely lest by the contentment of these he might be drawn to desire the Wine, and so be brought on to sin, to break his Vow, (and so make work for Hell, or for the Physician of Souls;) God hereby forbidding the most remote occasions, shews how wary and exactly careful men should be, to shun and avoid all occasions, provocations, and Appearrances of evil; and indeed we had need to keep off from slippery places, who can hardly stand fast on dry ground; he that ventures upon the occasion of Sin, and then prays, *Lead me not into Temptation*, is like him that thrusts his finger into the fire, and then prays, that it may not be burnt; or like him that is resolved to quench the fire with Oyl, which instead of quenching it, is as fewel

to

to feed it and encreaſe it.

It was a notable ſaying of one; *Majus eſt miraculum inter vehementes occaſiones non cadere, quam mortuos ſuſcitare*: It is a greater Miracle, not to fall being among ſtrong occaſions than it is to raiſe up the Dead: He that would not be defiled muſt not touch pitch; he that would not be burnt, muſt not carry fire in his boſom; he that would not eat the meat, muſt not meddle with the broth; he that would not fall into the Pit, muſt not dance upon the brink; he that would not feel the blow, muſt keep off from the Train: *Keep thee far from a falſe matter*, Exod. 33. 7.

Bernard in Cant. Ser. 65.

Prov. 6. 27, 28, 29. *Non diu tutus eſt periculo proximus.* Cypr. He is not long ſafe, that is near to danger.

He that will not flie from the occaſions and allurements of ſin (though they may ſeem never ſo pleaſant to the eye, or ſweet to the taſte) ſhall find them in the end to be more ſharp than Vinegar, more bitter than Wormwood, more deadly than poyſon.

There

There is a great truth in that saying of the Son of *Syrach*. *He that loveth danger, shall perish therein; he that will not decline danger, shall not be able to decline destruction.* Eccl. 3. 26, 27.

Socrates speaks of two young men, that flung away their Belts, when being in an Idols Temple the lustrating water fell upon them, detesting (saith the Historian) the Garment spotted by the flesh; and will you, O young men, play and toy with the occasions of Sin? the Lord forbid.

There are stories of several Heathens that have shunned and avoided the occasion of Sin, and will you dare to venture upon the occasions of Sin?

Alexander would not see the woman after whom he might have lusted.

Scipio Africanus warring in *Spain*, took new *Carthage* by storm, at which time a beautiful and noble Virgin fled to him for

for succour to preserve her Chastity, being but four and twenty years old, (and so in the heat of youth;) he hearing of it, would not suffer her to come into his sight, for fear of temptation, but caused her to be restored in safety to her Father. *Aurel. Victor.*

Livia counselled her Husband *Augustus*, not only not to do wrong, but not to seem to do so, *&c.* *Dio in vita.*

Cæsar would not search *Pompey's* Cabinet, lest he should find new matter of revenge.

Plato mounted upon his Horse, and judging himself a little moved with Pride, did presently light from his Horse, lest he should be overtaken with loftiness in riding.

Theseus is said to cut off his golden locks, lest his Enemies should take advantage by taking hold of them.

Ah! Young men, young men, shall the very Heathens thus shun and flie from the occasions of sin,

sin, and will not you? will not you who sit under the Sunshine of the Gospel? these will in the great day of account be sad and sore witnesses against those that dally and play with the occasions of Sin.

To prevent carnal carefulness Christ sends his Disciples to School to the irrational Creatures, *Mat.* 6. 26. ——— 32. And to prevent your closing with the occasions of sin, let me send you to School to the like Creatures, that you may learn by them to shun and avoid the occasions of Sin.

The *Sepia*, a certain kind of fish perceiving themselves in danger of taking, by an instinct which they have, they do darken the water, and so many times escape the Net which is laid for them.

Geese (they say) when they fly over *Taurus*, they keep stones in their mouths, lest by gagling they should discover themselves to the Eagles, which are amongst the Mountains waiting for them; now if

if all these consideration put together will not work you to decline the occasions of sin, I know not what will. There is a truth in that old saying,

He that will no evil do,
Must do nothing belong thereto.

The *Israelites* must have no leaven in their houses; till the Passover be done, lest they should be tempted to eat of it. Exod 12. 19.

3. Direction.

Thirdly, *If you would be good betimes, then you must remember the eye of God betimes.*

If you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then you must study Gods Omnipotence betimes. *Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? for his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the* Psal. 139. 13, 14. Job 31. 4. ch. 34. 21, 22, &c.

workers of iniquity many hide themselves.

Non se putent adulteri noctis tenebris vel parietum obtegi. Beda.

I have read that *Paphnutius* converted two famous young Strumpets, *Thais* and *Ephron*, from uncleanness, only with this Argument, that God seeth all things in the dark, when the doors are fast, the windows shut, and the curtains drawn. By this very Argument, *Solomon* labours to take off his young man from carnal and sinful courses: *And why wilt thou, my Son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosome of a stranger? for the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* Thou maist deceive all the World, like that couterfeit *Alexander* in *Josephus's* story, but *Augustus* will not be deceived, he hath quicker and sharper eyes.

Prov. 5. 20. 21.

Noli peccare, Deus videt, angeli astant, &c. Take heed what thou dost, God beholds thee, Angels observe thee.

Ah! Young men, young men, you may deceive this man, and that, and as easily deceive your selves, but you cannot deceive him, who is [illegible], *totus oculus*,

oculus,) all Eye. As the eyes of a well drawn Picture are fastened upon thee, which way soever thou turnest, so are the Eyes of the Lord. I have read of one, who being tempted to Adultery, said, they could not be private enough, and being carried from room to room, answered, we are not yet private enough, God is here.

Ah friends! his eyes which are ten thousand times brighter than the Sun, compass thy words, thy ways, thy works, thy thoughts, thy bed, thy board, thy bench. The Egyptian Hieroglyphick for God, was an Eye on a Scepter, shewing that he sees and rules all things. Jer. 13. 17. Heb. 29. 23.

Ah Friends! All Thoughts, Words, Hopes, and Hearts, are naked, opened, dissected, and quartered before that God with whom you have to do. God is very curious and exact in marking and observing what is done by men, that he may render to every man according to his works. Heb. 4. 13. *Tetrachtiſmena.*

Aug. de Civ. Dei. l. 6. c. 10.

St. *Augustine* speaks of an old *Comedian*, who having no other Spectators, went usually into the Theatre, and acted before the Statutes of the Gods.

Ah! Young Men and Women, the eye of God should be more to you, than all the World besides; O that this Scripture might be written with the Pen of a Diamond upon your hearts! *Fear ye not me?* (saith the Lord,) *and will ye not tremble at my presence?* There is a great truth in that saying of his, (*Magna nobis ex hoc indita est probitatis necessitas, quia omnia ante oculos judicis facimus cuncta cernentis*;) A great necessity of goodness is from hence put into us, because we do all things before the eyes of a Judge, that sees all things.

Jer. 5. 22, 32.

Boetius de consol. l. 6.

4. Direction.

2 Tim. 1. 3.

Fourthly, *If you would be good betimes, then you must hearken to the voice of Conscience betimes.*

A man will never begin to be good, till he begins to hearken to what Conscience speaks: So long as man turns a deaf ear to Conscience, he is a sure Prisoner to Satan, and a false enemy to God.

Psal. 58. 4. Joh. 3. 20, 21.

Ah! how good might many have been, had they but begun betimes to hearken to Conscience!

Ah! Young men, do not dally with Conscience, do not play, do not trifle with Conscience, do not stop your ears against Conscience: He that will not in his Youth give Conscience audience, shall at last be forced to hear such Lectures from Conscience, as shall make his life a very Hell. A sleepy Conscience is like a sleepy Lyon, when he awakes he roars and tears; so will Conscience, *Mark* 9. 22. Conscience is (*mille testes*,) a thousand witnesses, for or against a man; he that hath long turned the deaf ear to Conscience, shall at last find

Such shall find Conscience to be *Judex*, *Index*, *Vindex*.

find his Conscience like *Prometheus's Vulture*, that lies ever a gnawing. *Judas* found it so, and *Spira* found it so, and *Blair* a great Counsellour of *Scotland* found it so.

Jo. Wolf. lect. mem. To. 2. ad Ann. 1547.

I have read of one *John Hofmeister*, that fell sick in his Inn, as he was travelling towards *Ausburge* in *Germany*, and grew to that horrour of Conscience, that they were forced to bind him in his bed with Chains, where he cried out, That he was for ever cast off by God, and that the promises that were set before him would do him no good, and all because he had wounded his Conscience, and turned a Deaf ear to Conscience.

Well, Young Men, if you will not betimes hearken to Conscience, you shall at last hear Conscience saying to you, as the professioner Disciple said to Christ, *Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*; So saith Conscience; Sinner, I have called upon

Mat. 8. 19.

on thee many a thousand times, and told thee, that I must by commission, be thy best friend, or thy worst enemy, but thou wouldest not hear; and therefore, now I will follow thee whither ever thou goest; fast, and I will follow thee, and fill thee with horrours, and terrours; feast, and I will follow thee, and shew thee such a Hand-writing upon the Wall, as shall cause thy countenance to change, thy thoughts to be troubled, the joynts of thy loins to be loosed, and thy knees to dash one against another! stay at home and I will follow thee from bed to board; go aboard, and I will follow thee into all places and companies, and thou shalt know that it is an evil and a bitter thing, that thou hast so often and so long neglected my calls, and disobeyed my voice, and walked contrary to me; now thou shalt find a truth in that saying of *Luther*, (*Una gutta mala conscientiæ totum mare, &c.*) One drop of an evil Conscience

Dan. 5.5,6. *Tolle conscientiam, tolle omnia*; Take away conscience and take away all, saith the Heathen.

swallows up the whole Sea of worldly joy.

Well, Young men, there is a day coming, wherein a good Conscience will be better than a good Purse, for then the Judge will not be put off with a flirt of complements or fine words, nor drawn aside with hope of reward; and therefore as you would be able to hold up your heads in that day, make Conscience of hearkning to the voice of Conscience in this your day.

5. Direction.

Fifthly, *If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes wherein true happiness lies.*

For man will never begin to be good, till he begins to understand wherein his happiness consists: The Philosophers speaking of happiness were divided into two hundred eighty eight opinions, every one inventing something, and yet resolving nothing. Therefore the

Quot homines tot sententiæ, so many men so many minds.

the man in *Plutarch*, hearing them wrangle about mans (*summum bonum*) chiefest good, one placing it in this, and another in that; he went to the Market, and bought up all that was good, hoping among all he should not miss of it, but he did. Many look for happiness in sin, others look for it in the Creatures, but they must all say, It is not in us, (*Nil dat quod non habet,*) Nothing can give what it hath not; if the Conduit-pipe hath no water, it can give no water; If a man hath no money, he can give no money; if the creatures have no happiness, they can give no happiness: Now this Jewel, this Pearl, Happiness, is not to be found in the Breast, in the bosome of Creatures. In a word, because I must hasten to a close, Mans happiness lies,

Isa. 56. 12. Job 28. 14.

First, In his Communion with God, as Experience and Scripture demonstrates. *Happy is that people that is in such a case,* (but give me that word again,) *yea, happy is that People, whose God is the*

Psal. 3. 3d. 16.

Lord. A man whose soul is in communion with God, shall find more pleasure in a desert, in a dungeon, in a den, yea in death, than in the Palaces of a Prince, than in all worldly delights and contents, &c.

Pſ. 32. 1, 2. Secondly, In pardon of Sin; *Bleſſed is he whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered. Bleſſed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whoſe ſpirit there is no guile.* It is not, bleſſed is the honourable man, but bleſſed is the pardoned man; It is not, bleſſed is the rich man, but bleſſed is the pardoned man; It is not, bleſſed is the learned man, but bleſſed is the pardoned man; It is not, bleſſed is the politick man, but bleſſed is the pardoned man; It is not, bleſſed is the victorious man, but bleſſed is the pardoned man. *Do with me what thou will, ſince thou haſt pardoned my ſin,* ſaith Luther.

Thirdly, In a compleat Fruition and enjoyment of God, when we ſhall be here no more: *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall*

Mat. 5. 8. *ſee*

see God. Now they see him but darkly, but in heaven they shall see him face to face, they shall know as they are known. But of these things I have spoken largely elsewhere, and therefore shall satisfie my self with these hints.

1 Cor. 13. 12.

6. Direction.

Lastly, *If you would be good betimes, then you must break your covenant with sin betimes.*

You must fall out with your lusts betimes; you must arm and fence your selves against sin betimes; a man never begins to fall in with Christ, till he begins to fall out with his sins; till sin and the Soul be two, Christ and the Soul cannot be one. *Now to work your hearts to this, you should always look upon sin under these Notions.*

Isa. 28. 15, 18.

1. Notion.

First, *If you would have the league dissolved betwixt Sin and your Souls betimes, then look upon sin under the notion of an enemy betimes.*

Dearly

1 Pet. 2. 11. Sins, especially against knowledge are (*peccata vulnerantia, & devastantia.*) wounding and wasting.

Dearly Beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the Soul. As the Viper is killed by her young ones in her belly, so are poor sinners betrayed and killed by their own lusts, that are nourished in their bosoms.

Pittacus, a Philosopher, challenging *Phylon* the *Athenian* Captain (in their Wars against them) to single Combat, came to him privily, and so caught him, and overcame him; so doth sin with poor sinners. The dangerous, pernicious, malignant nature of sin, you may see in the story of the *Italian*, who first made his Enemy deny God, and then stabbed him to the heart, and so at once murthered both Body and Soul. Sin betrays us into the hand of the Devil, as *Dalilah* did *Sampson* into the hands of the *Philistines*.

Sugared Poysons go down pleasantly; Oh! but when they are down

down they gall, and gnaw, and gripe the very heart-strings asunder; it is so with sin: Ah! poor souls, have not you often found it so?

When *Phocas* the Murtherer thought to secure himself by building high walls, he heard a Voice from Heaven, telling him, that though he built his Bulwarks never so high, yet the sin within would soon undermine all.

S. *Ambrose* reports of one *Thesimus*, that having a *disease* upon his body, the Physician told him, that except he did abstain from intemperance, *drunkenness*, and *uncleanness*, he would lose his eyes: His heart was so desperately set upon his sins, that he cryes out, Then (*valet lumen amicum*) farewel sweet light.

Ah! how did his lusts war both against body and soul!

The Old Man is like a Treacherous friend, such a friendly Traitor; though it be a harder thing

thing to fight with a man's lusts, than it is to fight with the Cross, yet you must fight or die. If you are not the death of your sins, they will prove the death of your Souls.

As one of the Dukes of *Venice* died fighting against the *Nausatines* with his weapons in his hand,

The Oracle told the *Cyrrheans*, (*Noctesque diesque bella gerendum*,) they could not be happy, unless they waged War night and day; no more can we, except we live and die fighting our lusts,

Ah! Young Men, Can you look upon sin under the Notion of an Enemy, and not break with it, and not arm against it?

Well, remember this, the pleasure and sweetness that follows victory over sin, is a thousand times beyond that seeming sweetness that is in sin; and as victory over sin is the sweetest victory, so it is the greatest victory; there is no conquest to that which is gotten over a man's own corruption. *He that is slow to anger, is better*

than

than the Mighty, and he he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a City.

It is noble to overcome an enemy without, But it is more noble to overcome an enemy within; it is honourable to overcome fiery flames, but it is far more honourable to overcome fiery lusts.

When *Valentinian* the Emperour was upon his dying bed, among all his victories only one comforted him, and that was victory over his worst enemy (*viz.*) his own naughty heart.

Rom. 7. 22, 23. 2 Cor. 10. 3, 4, 5, 6. Gal. 5. 17

Ah! Young men, young men, your worst Enemies are within you, and all their Plots, Designs, and Assaults are upon your South, your most noble part; they know if that Fort Royal be won, all is their own, and you are undone, and shall be their slaves for ever; and therefore it stands you upon to arm your selves against these imbred enemies; and if you engage Christ in the quarrel, you will carry the day, and when

when you shall lie upon your dying beds, you will then find that there is no comfort to that which ariseth from the conquest of your own hearts, your own lusts.

2. Notion,

Secondly, *If you would break Covenant with sin, if you would arm and fence your selves against sin betimes, then look upon sin as the Soul's Bonds,*

2 Pet. 3. 6. Gal. 3. 10. Joh. 8. 34.

For as Bonds tie things together, so doth sin tie the sinner and the curse together, it binds the sinner and wrath together, it links the sinner and Hell together. *I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of Iniquity.* Iniquity is a chain, a bond; now bonds and chains gall the Body; and so doth sin the soul; and as poor Captives are held fast in their chains so are sinners in their sins, they cannot redeem themselves by their own power.

Acts 8. 23.

2 Tim. 2. ult.

Ah! Young men, young men,

no

no bondage to Soul bondage, no slavery to Soul slavery; the *Israelites* bondage under *Pharaoh*, and the Christians bondage under the *Turks*, is but the bondage of the body, of the baser and ignoble part of man; but yours is, Soul-bondage, Soul-slavery, which is the saddest and greatest of all.

Ah Friends! you should never look upon your *sins*, but you should look upon them as your *bonds*, yea, as the worst bonds that ever were; all other chains are golden chains, chains of Pearl, compared to those chains of Iron and Brass, those chains of lusts with which you are bound. Ah! who can thus look upon his chains, his sins, and not loath them, and not labour for Freedom from them? *Justinus* the Emperours Motto was, (*Libertas res inæstimabilis,*) Liberty is unvaluable; If Civil Liberty be, surely Spiritual Liberty is much more: If you ask souls that were once in a state of bondage, but are

St. *Augustine* calls Rome, that she was the great Mistress of the World, and the great drudge of Sin.

are now Christ's free-men, they will tell you so. It was a good observation of St. *Chrysostom*, that *Joseph* was the free-man, and his Mistress was the servant, when she was at the beck of her own lusts, when she tempted and he refused. Such as live most above sin and temptation, are the greatest free-men; others that live under the power of their lusts, are but slaves, and in bonds, though they dream and talk of freedom. *Tit.* 3. 3.

Chrysost. Hom. 39. in prior. Epist. ad Corinth.

3. Notion

Thirdly, *If you would break league with sin, and arm and fence yourselves against it, then look always upon sin under the notion of fire.*

And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire. Oh! snatch them out of their sins, as you would snatch a child, a friend out of the fire! Or as the Angel snatched *Lot* out of *Sodom*, hastily and with a holy violence; natural fire may burn the house, the good

Jude 23. *Apazontes* signifies a violent snatching, as the tender hearted Mother to save the life of her child, pulls it hastily, and with violence out of the fire.

goods, the treasure, the servant, the child, the wife, the body; but this fire burns the Soul, it destroys and consumes that noble part, which is more worth than all the treasures of a thousand Worlds; every man hath a hand, and a heart to quench that fire that burns in his Neighbours house, but few men have either hands or hearts to quench the fire that burns their Neighbours Souls: this is, and this shall be for a Lamentation.

I have read of one, who upon the violence of any temptation to sin, would lay his hands upon burning coals, and being not able to abide it, would say to himself, Oh! how unable shall I be to endure the pains of Hell? And this restrained him from evil: but what is the fire of Hell, to the fire of sin? Now to provoke you to look upon sin under the notion of fire, consider with me, the sundry resemblances between material and immaterial fire, between corporeal common fire, and between this

Dr. Denison's threefold Resolution, *part.* 2. *sect.* 2.

this Spiritual Fire, Sin. As,

First, Fire is terrible and dreadful; a Ship on fire, an House on fire, Oh how dreadful is it! so Sin set home upon the Conscience, is exceeding terrible and dreadful. *Mine iniquity* (so the Hebrew) *is greater than I can bear*: Sin or Iniquity is often put for the punishment of sin, by a Metonymy of the efficient for the effect; for sin is the natural Parent of Punishment. *Mine iniquity*, saith *Cain*, *is so great and lies so heavy, so terrible and dreadful upon my Conscience, that it cannot be forgiven*: And thus by his diffidence he stabs two at once the Mercy of God, and his own Soul. So *Judas*, *I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood*, and he went and hanged himself.

Gen. 4. 13. *Mentiris, Cain*, thou lyest, Cain, saith one on the Text.

Mat. 27. 3, 4, 5.

As there is no fighting with a mighty Fire, so there is no bearing up, when God sets home sin upon the Conscience; a man will then chuse strangling or hanging, rather than living under such wounds and lashes of Conscience.

Histo-

Histories abound with instances of this Nature: But I must hasten to a close.

Secondly, Fire is most dangerous and pernicious, when it breaks forth of the Chimney, or of the House; so it is with sin. Sin is bad in the eye, worse in the tongue, worser in the heart, but worst of all in the life. Fire, when out of its proper place, may do much hurt in the house, but when it flames abroad, then it doth most mischief to others. 1 Sam. 12. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

Sin in the heart may undo a man, but sin in the life may undo others, as well as a man's self. See a guard upon thy Eye, a greater upon thy Heart, but the greatest of all upon thy Life. Job 31. 1. Prov. 4. 23. Eph. 5. 15.

Salvian relates, how the Heathen did reproach some Christians, who by their lewd lives, made the Gospel of Christ to be a reproach: Where (said they) is that good Law which they do believe? where are those Rules of *Salvianus, de. G.*

of godliness which they do learn? they read the holy Gospel, and yet are unclean; they hear the Apostles Writing, and yet are drunk; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ; they profess a holy Law, and yet do lead impure lives.

1 Sam. 15. 9. 10. 11. 13. 14. 15.

But the lives of other Christians have been so holy; that the very Heathens observing them, have said, surely, this is a good God, whose servants are so good.

Job 31. 1. Prov. 4. 23. Eph. 5. 15.

It is brave, when the life of a Christian is a Commentary upon Christs Life.

Augustine.

One speaking of the Scripture, saith, (*Verba vivenda, non legenda,*) they are words to be lived and practised, not read only.

Plutarch.

A Heathen adviseth us to demean our selves so circumspectly, as if our Enemies did always behold us.

Epictetus.

And said another, For shame, either live as Stoicks, or leave off the name of Stoicks. Sirs, live as Christians, or lay down the name of Christians.

Third-

Thirdly, Fire hardens, it makes the weak and limber Clay to become stiff and strong for the Potters use. So Sin hardens, it hardens the heart against the commands of God, the Calls of Christ, and the wrestlings of the Spirit. As you see in *Pharaoh*, the *Jews*, and most that are under the sound of the Gospel.

Jer. 5. 3. ch. 19. ult. Isa. 9. 13.

Ah! How many hath this fire (Sin) hardened in these days, by working them to slight soul-softning means, and by drawing them to entertain hardning thoughts of God, and to fall in with soul-hardning company, and soul hardning principles, and Soul hardning examples, or hardened and unsensible sinners? One long since thus complained, That they did (*Patientius ferre Christi jacturam, quam suam*) more calmly pass by the injuries done to Christ, than those which are done unto themselves: This Age is full of such hardened unsensible souls.

Jer. 2. 25. ch. 18. 12.

Fourth-

Fourthly, Fire is a lively active Element; so is sin.

Ah! how lively and active was the fire in *Abraham*, *David*, *Job*, St. *Peter*, St. *Paul*, and other Saints though Christ by his death hath given it its mortal wound, yet it lives, and is, and will be active in the dearest Saints. Though Sin and Grace were not born together, neither shall they die together; yet while Believers live in this World, they must live together. There is a History that speaks of a Fig-tree that grew in a stone-wall, and all means was used to kill it; they cut off the branches and it grew again, they cut down the body and it grew again, they cut it up by the root and still it lived, and grew, until they pulled down the stone-wall: Till Death shall pull down our stone-walls, sin will live, this fire will burn.

Gen. 22. Psal. 51. Job. 3. Mat. 26. Rom. 7. 15, &c.

Isidore the Monk was very much out, who vaunted that he had in himself no motion to sin forty years together.

We may say of Sin, as some say of Cats, that they have many lives; kill them, and they will live

live again, kill them again and they will live again: So kill Sin once, and it will live again; kill it again, and it will live again, &c. Sin oftentimes is like that Monster *Hydra*; cut off one head, and many will rise up in its rooom.

Fifthly, Fire is of a penetrating nature, it pierceth and windeth it self into every corner, and chink; and so doth sin wind it self into our thoughts, words, and works, it will wind it self into our understandings, to darken them; and into our judgments, to pervert them; and into our wills, to poyson them; and into our affections, to disorder them; and into our Consciences, to corrupt them; and into our carriages, to debase them. Sin will wind it self into every Duty, and every Mercy; it will wind it self into every one of our enjoyments, and concernments.

Isa. 1. 5, 6. Rom. 7, 13, 17. Sin is (*Malum catholicum,*) A Catholick evil. *Quodcunque in peccato, peccatum est.* Whatsoever is in sin, is sin.

Hanibal, having overcome the *Romans*, put on their Armour

on his Souldiers; and so by that policy, they being taken for *Romans*, won a City: but what are *Hannibal*'s wiles to sins wiles, or Satans wiles? If you have a mind to be acquainted with their wiles, look over my Treatise, called *Precious remedies against Satans Devices.*

Psal. 21. 9. 2 Pet. 2. 5, 6. Prov. 6. 32. Eccl. 9. 18. Prov. 13. 15. Ch. 20. 19. Ch. 11. 2. Ch. 15. 25. Ch. 21. 7.

Sixthly and lastly, Fire is a devouring, a consuming Element, it turns all fuel into Ashes, it is a Wolf that eats up all. So sin is a Fire that devours and consumes all: it turned *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* into ashes, it hath destroyed the *Chaldean*, *Persian*, and *Grecian* Kingdoms, and will at last destroy the *Roman* Kingdom also. This Wolf eat up *Sampson*'s strength, *Absolom*'s beauty, *Achitophel*'s policy, and *Herod*'s glory, *&c.* It hath drowned one World already, and will at last burn another, even this. Oh the Hopes, the Hearts, the Happiness, the Joys, the comforts, the Souls that this fire (Sin) hath con-

consumed, and destroyed, &c.

Peter Camos a Bishop of *Bayo* in *France*, in his draught of Eternity, *Num.* 7. 5. tells us, that some devout Personages caused those words of the Prophet *Isaiah* to be written in Letters of Gold upon their Chimney-pieces: *Who amongst us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Isa. 33. 14.

Ah! Young men, young men, I desire that you would always look upon sin under the notion of fire, yea as such fire as lays the foundation for everlasting fire, for everlasting burnings, and this may work when others will not.

I have read of a grave and chast Matron, who being moved to commit folly with a lewd Ruffian, after some discourse she called for a pan of burning coals, requesting him for her sake to hold his finger in them but an hour: He answered, This is

an unkind request; to whom she replied, That seeing he would not do so much as to put one finger upon the coals for an hour, she would not yield to that, for which she should be tormented both body and soul in Hell for ever. The Application is easie. Or,

4. Notion.

Fourthly, *If you would break with sin betimes, if you would arm against sin in the spring and morning of your days, then you should look upon sin under the notion of a thief.*

And indeed sin is the greatest Thief, the greatest Robber in the World; it robbed the Angels of all their Glory, it robbed *Adam* of his Paradise and Felicity, and it hath robbed all the Sons of *Adam* of five precious Jewels, the least of which was more worth than Heaven and Earth.

2 Pet. 3. 4. Gen. 3.

1. It hath robbed them of the holy and glorious Image of God, which would have been fairly in-

graven

graven upon them, had Adam stood, &c.

2. It hath robbed them of their Sonship, and of Sons hath made them Slaves.

3. It hath robbed them of their friendship, and made them enemies.

4. It hath robbed them of their communion and fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit, and made them strangers and aliens.

5. It hath robbed them of their glory, and made them vile and miserable. It hath robbed many a nation of the Gospel, and many a Parish of many a happy Guide, and many a Christian of the favour of God, the Joyes of the Spirit, and the peace of Conscience.

Well did one of the Fathers call Pride and Vainglory, *The sweet Spoiler of spiritual Excellencies, and a pleasant Thief.*

Oh! the Health, the Wealth, the Honour, the Friends, the Relations that Sin hath robbed thousands of!

Nay, it hath robbed many of their Gifts, their Arts, their Parts, their Memory, their Judgements;

yea, their very reason, as you may see in *Pharaoh*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Belshazzar*, *Ashitophel*, *Haman*, *Herod*, and those Babylonish Princes that accused *Daniel*.

And so in *Menippus* of *Phœnicia*, who having lost his goods, strangled himself. And so *Dinarchus Phidias* a certain lost cut his own throat, to save the charge of a Cord. And so *Augustus Cæsar* (in whose time Christ was born) was so troubled and astonished at the relation of an overthrow from *Varus*, that for certain months together he let the hair of his head and beard grow still, and wore it long; yea and other whiles would run his head against the doors, crying out, *Quintilius Varus* deliver up my legions again: By all which it is most apparent, that sin is the greatest Thief in all the world.

Oh! Then who would not break League and Covenant with it? and be still in pressing of God to do justice upon it, &c.

5. No-

5. Notion.

Fifthly, *If you would break with sin, and arm and fence your selves against sin betimes, then you must look upon Sin under the notion of a burden betimes.* Neh. 1. 1. Hab. 1. 1. Mal. 1. 1.

And indeed, Sin of all burdens is the heaviest burden in all the World. *Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me.* Psal. 40 12. And again *Mine iniquities are gone over my head,* (saith the same person) *as an heavy burthen they are too heavy for me to bear.* Psal. 38. 4. Sin is a weight that easily besets poor Souls, it is a burden that so troubles them, and puzzles them, that so curbs them, and girds them, that so presses and oppresses them, as that it wrings many bitter tears from their eyes, and many sad and grievous sighs and groans from their hearts. Heb. 12. 1 Rom. 7. 13. *ult.*

Again, As Sin is a burden to

Christian; so it is a burden to Heaven, it made Heaven weary to bear the Angels that fell; no sooner had they sinned but Heaven groans to be eased of them, and it never left groaning till Justice had turned them a groaning to Hell.

Jude 6.

Again, As sin is a burden to Heaven, so sin is a burden to the Earth; witness her swallowing up *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, their Wives, Children, Goods, Servants, *&c.* Ah sinners! your sins make the very Earth to groan; they make the Earth weary of bearing you. Oh! how doth the Earth groan and long to swallow up those Earthly wretches, whose hopes, whose hearts are buried in the Earth; these shall have little of Heaven, but enough of Earth when they come to die.

Numb. 16. 16, 35.

Cornelius à Lapide, tells a story, that he heard of a famous Preacher, who shewing the bondage of the Creature, brings in the Creatures

Rom. 8. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

tures complaining thus: Oh! that we could serve such as are Godly! Oh! that our substance and our flesh might be incorporated into godly people, that so we might rise into glory with them? Oh! that our flesh might not be incorporated into the flesh of sinners; for if it be we shall go to Hell, and would any Creature go to Hell? Oh! we are weary of bearing sinners, we are weary of serving of sinners: Thus the Creatures groans, thus the Creatures complain, the sinners sins forcing them to it, &c.

Again, Sin is a burden to God. *Behold I am pressed under you, as a Cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.* By this plain, pithy, country-comparison God shews how sadly he is pressed and oppressed; how sorely he is wearied and tired with those peoples sin. Divine patience is even worn out; Justice hath lift up her hand, and will bear with them no longer. God seems to groan under the pressure of their

Amos 2. 1.

sins, as a Cart seems to do under a heavy load; of this God complains by the Prophet *Isaiah*: *Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.* I am as weary of your sins, as a travelling Woman is weary of her pains, saith God, Sin was such a burthen to God, that he sweeps it off with a sweeping flood, *Gen.* 7. *&c.*

Isa. 43. 24.

Again sin is a burden to Christ, it made him sweat as never man sweat! it made him sweat great drops of clotted or congealed blood. Sin put Christs whole body into a bloody sweat, it made him groan pitiously when he bare our Sins on his body on the Tree. Sin made his Soul heavy even to the death; and had he not been one that was mighty, yea that was Almighty, he had fainted and failed under his burden. And thus you see what a burden sin is to Man, to the Creatures, to Heaven, to Earth, to God, to Christ, and therefore

Luk. 22. 44. A strange watering of a Garden. *Bern.*

1 Pet. 2. 2.

Isa. 9. 6.

as

as you would break with sin betimes, look always upon it as a burden, yea, as the greatest and heaviest burden in all the World, &c.

6. Notion.

Sixthly and lastly, *If you would break Covenant with sin, and arm and fence your selves against it betimes, then you must look upon it betimes under the notion of a Tyrant.*

And indeed sin is the worst and greatest Tyrant in the World. Other Tyrants can but Tyrannize over our bodies, but Sin is a Tyrant that Tyrannizes over both Body and Soul, as you may see in the sixth, and seventh of the *Romans*. Sin is Tyrant that hath a kind of jurisdiction in most mens hearts, it sets up the Law of Pride, the Law of Passion, the Law of Oppression, the Law of Formality, the Law of Hypocrisie, the Law of Carnality, the Law of Self-love, the

Tit. 3. 3.

the Law of carnal Reason, the Law of Unbelief, and strictly commands Subjection to them, and proclaims Fire and Sword to all that stand out; this Saints and Sinners, Good Men and Bad, do sufficiently experience.

Thales one of the seven Sages, used to say that few Tyrants lived to be old, but it is far otherwise with this Tyrant Sin.

Sin is a Tyrant of many thousand years standing, and though it hath had many a wound and many a foil, and received much opposition, yet still it plays the Tyrant all the World over. Oh! the hearts that this Tyrant makes to ake, the Souls that this Tyrant makes to bleed.

Pro. 6. 4, 16.

Pharaoh's Tyranny was nothing to sins Tyranny; this Tyrant will not so much as suffer his slaves to sleep: *They sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall. The wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.*

Isa. 57. 20, 21.

Other Tyrants have been brought

brought down, and brought under by humane power, but this cannot but by a Divine; the power of man hath brought down many of the Tyrants of this World, but it is only the power of Christ that can bring down this Tyrant, that can cast down his strong holds, 2 Cor. 10. 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. therefore ingage Christ in the conflict, draw him into the battle, and in the end the conquest will be yours.

Vitellius, who had been Emperour of all the World, yet was driven thorow the streets of *Rome* stark naked, and thrown into the River *Tyber*, &c.

Andronicus the Emperour, for his cruelty towards his people, was by them at last shamefully deposed, and after many contumelies, hanged up by the heels.

Ptolomy was put on a Cross, *Bajazet* in an Iron Cage, *Phocas* broken on the Wheel, *Lycaon* cast to the Dogs (as well as *Jezabel*) *Attalus* thrust into a Forge, King *Gath* into a Beer-barrel, &c. But none

of

of these that have tamed these Tyrants, that have brought down these mighty *Nimrods*, have been able to tame, to bring under the Tyrants, the sins, the lusts that have been in their own bosoms; many a man hath had a hand in bringing down of worldly Tyrants; who notwithstanding have died for ever from the hand of a Tyrant within, *&c.*

CHAP. VIII.

AND thus much for the Directions that young men must follow, if they would be good betimes, if they would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their days. I shall now give some brief Answers to the young mans Objections, and the old mans Scruples, and so close up this Discourse.

Object. 1.

But some young men may object and say, you would have us to be good betimes,

times, and to seek and serve the Lord in the primrose of our days, but it may be time enough hereafter to follow this counsel; we are young, and it may be time enough for us to mind these things hereafter, when we have satisfied the flesh so and so; or when we have got enough for the World, and laid up something that will stand us in stead, and that may oyl our joynts when we are old. Now,

To this Objection I answer,

First, That it is the greatest folly and madness in the world, to put off God and the great things of eternity with May-be's; what Trades-man, what Merchant, what Mariner, so mad, so foolish, so blockish, as to put off a present season, a present opportunity of profit and advantage, upon the account of a May-be? It may be I may have as good a season, it may be I shall have as golden an opportunity to get and to inrich my self as this is; and therefore Farewel to this. No men that are in their right minds will argue

argue thus; and why then should you, especially in the things that are of an everlasting concernment to you?

I have read of one *Monarcho*, a Frantick *Italian*, who thought that all the Kings of the Earth were his Vassals; and as Frantick are they who wilfully neglect present seasons of Grace, upon the account of a future May-be, *&c.*

Young men, if you will but go into burial places, you shall find graves exactly of your length.

Secondly, I answer, it may be if thou neglectest this present season and opportunity of grace, thou mayest never have another; it may be Mercy may never knock more if thou dost not now open, it may be Christ shall never be offer to thee more, if now thou dost not close with him, and accept of him; it may be the Spirit will never strive more with thee, if now thou dost resist him, and withstand him; it may be a pardon shall never be offered to thee more, if now thou wilt not take it; it may be the Gospel shall never sound more in thy ears;

now

now thou wilt not hear it: now set one May-be against another May-be, set Gods May-be against thine own May-be. But,

Thirdly, Doubtless there are many thousand thousands now in Hell, who have pleased themselves, and put off God and the seasons of Grace with a May-be, hereafter may be time enough; It may be when I have gratified such a lust, and when I have treasured so much of the World, I will return, and seek, and serve the Lord; but before ever this season or opportunity came, Justice hath cut the thread of their lives, and they are now miserable for ever; and now they are still a cursing themselves, because they have slipt their golden opportunities upon the account of a May-be, *&c.*

It was an unspeakable vexation to King *Lysimachus*, that his staying to drink one draught of water, lost him his Kingdom.

Fourthly and lastly, This puting off of God and the present seasons of Grace with a May-be, is very provoking to God, as you may see if you would but read from

from the twentieth verse to the three and thirtieth of the first of *Proverbs*. Nothing stirs and provokes a Master more, than his Servants putting off his service or his commands with a May-be; it may-be I will, it may-be I may do this and that; nothing puts a Master sooner into a heat, a flame, than this; nor nothing puts God more into a flame than this, as you may see by comparing *Psal.* 95. *ver.* 6. to the end, with that third of the *Hebrews*, and the 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Read the words and tremble at the thoughts of a May-be, at the thoughts of putting off God, and the seasons of grace.

I have read of two, who cut off their right hands for one another, and then made it an excuse, a put off, they were lame, and so could not serve in the Gallies of *France* the first, King of *France*; but this practice of theirs did so incense and provoke the King that he sent them both to the Gallows.

I suppose the Reader is not so young, but knows how to apply it.

Object. 2.

If I should begin to be good betimes, and to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of my days, I should lose my friends, I should lose their favour, for they are carnal and worldly, and had rather I should seek after Gold than God, the Creature than Christ, Earth than Heaven, &c.

Now to this I answer, Surely you are out; for,

First, This is the high way, the readiest way to gain the best, the surest, and the soundest friends; *When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.* When a man falls in with God, God will work the creatures to fall in with him: *Joseph* found it so, and *Jacob* found it so, and *Job* found it so, the three Children found it so, and *Daniel* found it

Prov. 16. 7. Job. 5. 23. to 28.

it so, as you all know that have but read one Scripture, and many in this age (as bad as it is) have found that the best way to make Friends, is first to make God our Friend. Ah! young men, young men, you shall not lose your friends (by seeking and serving the Lord in the Spring and Morning of your days) but only exchange bad ones for good ones, the worst for the best; he that gives up himself betimes to the Lord shall have God for his friend, and Christ for his friend, and the Angels for his friends, and the Saints for his friends; Christ will be to such,

Luk. 15. 7. Isa. 10. 6, 7, 8, 9. Heb. 4. 14. Isa. 59. 16 17. ch. 44 14. Mal. 3. 6. Psal. 121. 4, 5.

First, *An Omnipotent Friend.*
Secondly, *An Omniscient Friend.*
Thirdly, *An Omnipresent Friend.*
Fourthly, *An Indeficient Friend.*
Fifthly, *An Independent Friend.*
Sixthly, *An Immutable Friend.*
Seventhly, *A Watchful Friend.*
Eighthly, *A Loving Friend.*
Ninthly, *A Faithful Friend.*
Tenthly, *A Compassionate Friend.*
Eleventhly, *A Close Friend.*

Ther

There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a Brother, Prov. 18. 24. Such a friend is Christ, and such a friend is as ones own Soul, and a rare happiness, hardly to be match'd.

1 Joh. 4. 16. Tit. 1. 2. Isa. 63. 9.

Twelfthly, *An Universal Friend*, a friend in all cases, and a friend in all places. Christ is so a friend to every one of him, as if he were a friend to none besides: Hence it is that they say, not only, *our* Lord, *our* God, but *my* Lord, *my* God: Christ is such an Universal friend, as that he supplies the place, and acts the part of every friend.

Luk. 1. 43. Joh. 20. 28. Phil. 4. 19. Joh. 13. 1.

Thirteenthly, *He is our best friend*, Psal. 90. 1. before we had a friend in all the World, he was our friend, Prov. 8. 1.

Lastly, *He is a constant friend, Whom he loves, he loves to the end.*

Alexander the Great cannot cut that knot of Friendship that is tyed betwixt Christ and his.

Augustus Cæsar would not suddenly entertain a League of friendship with any, but was a constant friend to those he loved; (*Amare nec cito desisto, nec temerè incipio,*) Late ere love, as long ere I leave;

Where

Where Christ begins to love, he always loves, *Jer.* 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*: Now who would not venture the loss of all friends in the world, to gain such a friend as this is?

Ah! Young men, and Women, let me say to you what *Seneca* said to his friend *Polybius*; (*Fas tibi non est de fortunâ conqueri, salvo Cæsare,*) Never complain of thy hard fortune as long as *Cæsar* is thy friend; so say I, never complain of your loss of friends, so long as by losing of them, you gain Christ to be your friend.

Secondly, Thou wert better be without their friendship and favour than to enjoy it upon any sinful and unworthy accounts; thou wert better run the hazard of losing thy friends, and their favour, by seeking and serving the Lord in the Primrose of thy days, than to run the hazard of losing God, Christ, Heaven, Eternity, and thy Soul for ever, by neglecting the things of thy peace. It was a gallant return which the noble

Mat. 8. 46. Mat 16. 26.

noble *Sutilius* made his friend, requesting of him an unlawful favour, in such language as this; I had as good be without such a friend, as with him, who will not let me speed in what I ask: To whom he replied, I can want such a friend as you, if for your sake I must do that, that is not honest. The Application is easie.

Well young men, remember this The torment of a thousand Hells, were there so many, comes far short of this one voice, to be turned out of Gods presence with a (*Now never more,*) I know you not. Mat. 7. 23.

Ah! Young man, young man, thou wert better ten thousand thousand times to be cast out of the thoughts and hearts of thy carnal friends and relations, than to be cast out of Gods presence with cursed *Cain* for ever, than to be excommunicated out of the general Assembly of the Saints, and Congregation of the first born, which are written in Heaven: and therefore away with this objection. But Gen. 4. Heb. 12. 23.

Third-

Thirdly, The favour and friendship of such carnal persons, is very sickle and inconstant, it is very fading and withering. Now they stroke, and anon they strike; now they lift up, and anon they cast down; now they smile, and anon they frown; now they kiss and anon they kill; now they cry, *Hosanna*, *Hosanna*, and anon they cry Crucifie him, Crucifie him. *Haman* is one day feasted with the King, and the next day made a feast for Crowes; the Princes of *Babilon* were highly in King *Darius* his favour one day, and cast into the Lyons Den the next; the Scribes and Pharisees that cryed up *Judas* one day, did in effect, bid him go and hang himself the next day.

Esth. 7.

Dan. 6. Mat 27. 3, 4, 5. *Valerian*, *Valens*, *Belisarius*, *Bajazit*, *Pythias*, *Dionisius*, *Pompey*, *William* the Conquerour, and many others have found it so.

Such mens favours and friendship are as *Venice* Glasses, quickly broken, and therefore not much to be prized or minded. Histories abound with instances of this nature, but I must hasten, only remembring this, that every day experience tells us, that wicked men can

can soon turn Tables, and cross their *Books*; their favour and friendship is usually like to a morning Cloud, or like to *Jonah's* Gourd, one hour flourishing, and the next hour withering and why then shouldest thou set thy Heart upon that which is more changeable than the Moon? But,

Fourthly and lastly, Who but a mad man would adventure the loss of the Kings *favour* to gain the *favour* of his Page? who but a stark *Bedlam* would run the hazard of losing the Judges favour upon the Bench to purchase the good will of the Prisoner at the Bar.

Socrates, preferred the King's Countenance before his Coin; and so must you prefer the favour of *God*, the countenance of *Christ*, and the things of Eternity, above all the favour and friendship of all the men in the *World*: When your neerest Friends, and deerest Relations stand in Competition with Christ, or the things above, you must shake them off; you must turn your backs

Glaucus who changed his Armour of Gold with *Diomede* for his Armour of Brass stands upon record for a Fool.

Psal. 4. 6, 7.

Psal. 45. 10. Mat. 10. 30. Luk. 14. 7. 26 2, 7.

harke upon them, and welcome Christ, and the things of your Peace; he that forsakes all Relations for Christ, shall certainly find all Relations in Christ; he will be Father, Friend, Husband, Child; he will be every thing to thee, who takest him for the great All.

Object. 3.

I, but I shall meet with many reproaches from one, and another, if I should labour to be good betimes, if I should seek and serve the Lord in the Spring and Morning of my Youth.

Now to this I answer,

First, What are reproaches to the great things that others have suffered for Christ, his Gospel, and the maintaining of a good Conscience? What is a prick of a Pin, to stab at the Heart? What is a chiding, a hanging, a whipping to a burning? No more are all the Reproaches thou canst meet with, to the great things that others have suffered for Christ's sake.

Hebrews, Ch. 10, 11. Read the Ten Persecutions.

Ah! young Man, you should [illegible] like the Scythians, that were [illegible]

in the Snow, and when *Alexander* wondered how he could endure it, answered, *I am not ashamed, for I am all forehead.*

So should you in the cause and way of Christ, you should not be ashamed, you should be all forehead, you should be stout and bold.

Colonius the Dutch Martyr, under all his reproaches, called to the Judge that had sentenced him to Death, and desired him to lay his hand upon his Heart, and then asked him whose Heart did most beat, his or the Judges. All the reproaches in the World should not so much as make a Christians heart beat, they should not in the least trouble him, nor disturb him; But,

Secondly, I answer, That all the reproaches thou meetest with in the way of Christ, and for the sake of Christ, they do but add Pearls to thy Crown, they are all additions to thy happiness and blessedness.

If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory, and of God, rest- 1 Pet. 4. 14.

oth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified: The more you are reproach'd for *Christ's* sake on Earth, the greater shall be your reward in Heaven; they that are most loaded with reproaches here, shall be most loaded with glory hereafter. *Christ* hath written their Names in golden Letters in his book of Life, that are written in black Letters of reproach for his sake on Earth. 'Twas a good saying of one, *A Reproach* (saith he) *is beneath a man, but the reproached, that bear it well are equal to Angels*: Of all Crowns the Reproached Man's Crown will weigh heaviest in Heaven. But,

Mat. 5. 11, 12.

Chrysost.

So was *Joseph*, *Mephibosheth*, *Naboth*: and in latter times *Luther*, who they said died desparing when he was alive to confute it. And that *Beza* ran away with another man's Wife. And that *Calvin* was branded on the Shoulder for a Rogue. But there would be no end of these, if I should say all that might be said.

Thirdly, I answer, The best Men have been most reproached; *David* was, *Psal.* 62. 7. *Psal.* 89. 50. *Psal.* 119. 22. *Psal.* 31. 11. *Psal.* 109. 25. And *Job* was, *Job.* 19. 3

Ch. 20. 3. Job 16. 10. And Jeremiah was, Jer. 20. 7, 10. Yea this hath been the common portion of the People of God in all Ages of the World; in Nehemiah's time it was so, Neh. 1. 3. *And they said unto me, the Remnant that are left of the Captivity, are in great affliction and Reproach.* In David's time it was so, Psal. 79. 4. and 44. 13, 14. and in Jeremiah's time it was so, Lam. 5. 1. *Remember O Lord, what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach.* And in Daniel's time it was so, Dan. 9. 16. *Thy People are become a reproach to all that are about us.* And it was so in the Apostles time, Rom. 3. 8. *And not rather as we are slanderously reported, as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come; whose Damnation is just.* 2. Cor. 6. 8. *By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true*: so in that, 1 Tim. 4 10. *For therefore we both labour and suffer Reproach, because we trust in the living God, &c.* And it was so in the Primitive

times, for when the Christians met together before Sun to pray, the Heathens reported of them, that they worshiped the Sun, and aspired after Monarchy, and committed Adulteries, and unnatural Uncleannesses. Now who is troubled, who complains of that which is a common Lot, as Cold, Winter, Sickness, Death? &c. No more should any complain of Reproaches, it being the common Lot of the People of God in all Ages; yea, Christ himself was sadly reproached, falsly accused, and strangely traduced, disgraced and scandalized; he was called a Glutton, a Drunkard, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners, and judged to use the Black Art, casting out Devils by *Beelzebub* the Prince of Devils; Christ hath sufferred the greatest and the worst reproaches, why then should you be afraid to wear that Crown of Thorns that Christ hath wore before you? There is a great truth in what he said, (*Non potest qui patitur, ejus esse qui possus est*;) He that

Mat 9. 34. Ch. 1.2 24.

Tertul. de fuga in persecut.

that is afraid to suffer, cannot be his Disciple who suffered so much; if the Master had been marked with a black coal, let not the Servant think to go free. I am heartily angry (saith *Luther*) with those that speak of my Sufferings, which if compared with that which Christ suffered for me are not once to be mention'd in the same day. But,

Fourthly, Lastwer, That all Reproachers shall at last be arraigned at the highest Bar of Justice, for all the reproaches that they have cast upon the people of God.

They think it strange, (or they think it a new World) *that you run not with them to the same excess of riot; speaking evil of you: Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the Quick and the Dead.*

1 Pet. 4. 4. Ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων. Wonder and blasphemie.

I am in an extasie, (saith *Picus Mirandula*,) to think how prophane Men rail upon those now, whom one day they will wish they had imitated. It was excellent Counsel that the Heathen Orator gave

his Hearers. (*Ita vivamus, ut rationem nobis reddendam arbitremur.*) Let us live as those that must give an account of all at last.

St. *Chrysostom* brings in Christ comforting his Disciples against *Reproaches*, speaking thus unto them: *What, is the wrong grievous to you, that now they call you Seducers and Conjurers? It will not be long before that shall openly call you the Saviours and blessings of the whole World: that time that shall declare all things that are now hid, shall rebuke them for their lying words against you, and shall kindle the splendor of your Vertue, so they shall be found Lyars, evil speakers, false accusers of others; but you shall be more clear and illustrious than the Sun, and you shall have all men Witnesses of your Glory.* Such as wisely and humbly bear reproaches now, shall judge Reproachers at last; But,

Cic. 4. in Verr.

Isa. 3. 12. Mic. 7. 9. 10, 11.

1 Cor. 6. 2. 4.

Fifthly, I answer, That God doth many times, even in this Life, bear sad witness and testimony against the reproachers of his people; *I will bless*

bless them that bless thee, and I will curse them that curse thee. God will even in this life curse them with a witness, who curse them that he blesseth; *Pharaoh* found it so, and *Saul* found it so, and *Jezabel* found it so, and *Haman* found it so, and the Princes of *Babilon* found it so, and the *Jews* find it so to this very day.

Gen. 12. 3. 2 Sam. 10. 11, 12, 13. Divine justice is like *Vulcan's* Iron Net, that took the Gods; it apprehends and condemns all that are reproachers and enemies to his people.

And Oh! the dreadful Judgements and Curses that God hath poured out upon the Reproachers of his Name, of his Son, of his Spirit, of his Word, of his Ordinances, and of his People, in these days wherein we live. I might give you many sad *Instances* of such in our days, whom his justice hath taken in the Snare, each of abstracted concerns, and sublime speculations; and indeed such usually prove the great wise Fools, who like the Lark, soaring higher and higher, peering and peering, till at length they fall into the Net of the Fowler; and no wonder, for such persons usually are as

censorious as they are curious.

Sixthly, I answer, St. *Paul* rejoyced more in his *suffering* reproaches for Christ's sake, than he did in his being wrapt up in the third Heaven, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong.* And therefore you have him often singing this Song, *I Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ*; not I *Paul* wrapped up into the third Heaven: He look'd upon all his Sufferings as God's love-tokens, he look'd upon all *reproaches*, as pledges and badges of Sonship; and therefore joys and glories under all. Christ shewed his love to him, in wrapping him up in the third Heaven, and he shewed his love to *Christ* in his joyful bearing of Reproaches for his sake. St. *Paul* rattles his Chain (which he bears for the Gospel,) and was proud of it as a Woman of her Ornaments, saith *Chrysostom*.

Now why should that be matter

(*Crudelitas vestra gloria nostra.*) Your cruelty is our glory, said they in *Tertull.* Fire, Sword, Prison, Famine, are all delightful to me, saith *Basil.*

of trouble and discouragement to you, that was matter of joy and rejoycing to him? Shall he look upon reproaches as a Crown of Honour, and will you look upon reproaches as a Crown of Thorns?

Oh! look upon reproach as a Royal Diadem, look upon it as *Christ's* Livery, and count it your highest ambition in the World, to wear this Livery for his sake, who once wore a Crown of Thorns for your sakes. When *Babilas* was to die, he required this favour, to have his Chains buried with him, as the Ensigns of his Honour; But,

Seventhly, I answer, That by a wise and gracious behaviour under the reproaches thou meet'st with for *Christ's* sake, thou may'st be instrumental to win others to *Christ*.

It was a notable saying of *Luther*, (*Ecclesia totum mundum convertit, sanguine & Oratione.*) The Church converteth the whole World by Blood and Prayer.

Divers have been won to *Christ*, by beholding the gracious carriages of

Sufferings are the Ensigns of Heavenly Nobility, saith *Calvin*.

It was an observation of Mr. *John Lindsey*, that the very smoak of Mr. *Hamilton* converted as many as it blew upon.

of Christians under their sufferings and reproaches for Christ.

We read of *Ceceliah*, a poor Virgin, who by her gracious behaviour under all her sufferings and reproaches for Christ, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ.

See also the History of the Concil of Trent. 418. a Edi.

Adrianus beholding the gracious chearful carriages of the Martyrs under all their sufferings and reproaches, was converted to Christ, and afterwards suffered Martyrdom for Christ.

Justin Martyr was also converted by observing the holy and chearful behaviour of the Saints under all their Sufferings and Reproaches for Christ: During the Cruel Persecutions of the Heathen Emperours, the Christian Faith was spread through all places of the Empire, because the oftner they were mown down (saith *Tertullian*) the more they grew.

And St. *Augustine* observed, that through these [illegible]

sands put to death for professing Christ; yet they were never the fewer for being slain.

Ah! Young Men, you may by a wise and gracious bearing of Reproaches for Christ, be instrumental to win others to Christ; and therefore never plead there is a Lyon in the way. But I must hasten: And therefore in the Eighth and

Last place, consider how bravely several of the very Heathens have born reproaches; and let that provoke you in the face of all *Reproaches* to seek and serve the Lord in the Morning of your youth, *&c.*

When *Demosthenes* was reproached by one, I *will not* (saith he) *strive with thee in this kind of fighting, in which he that is overcome is the better man.*

When one came and reproached *Xenophon*, (says he) *You have learned how to reproach, and I have learned how to bear reproach.*

And *Aristippus* (the Philosopher) said, *I have skill to cast reproaches, and I am fit to bear reproaches.*

De-

Demochares an *Athenian* Orator, was sent to King *Philip* as Ambassadour. *Philip* asked him how he might pleasure the *Athenians*: Forsooth saith he, *If you will hang your self.* The Prince patiently sent him home again and bid him ask whether were more noble the patient hearer, or venter of such unseemly language.

When one wondred at the patience of *Socrates*, towards one who reviled and reproached him; if we should meet one, saith he, whose Body were more unsound than ours, should we be angry with him, and not rather Pity him? Why then should we not do the like to him whose Soul is more diseased then others?

Augustus Cæsar (in whose time Christ was born) bid *Catullus* the railing Poet to Supper, to shew that he had forgiven him.

It is a notable example that we find of one *Pericles*, who as that was sitting within doors in the great Meeting, a foul mouthed Fellow bitterly

Plutarch in vita Pe-

bitterly reproached him, and railed all the day long upon him, and at Night when it was dark, and the Meeting up, the fellow followed him, and railed at him, even to his door, and he took no notice of him but when he came at home, this is all he said, *Friend, it is dark, I pray let my Man light you home.*

Themistocles professed that if two ways were shewed him, one to Hell, and the other to the Bar, he would chuse that which went to Hell, and forsake the other.

Josephus reports of that *Herod* that is made mention of in *Acts* 12. 13. that when one *Simon* a Lawyer had grievously reproached and scandalized him before the people, he sent for him, and caused him to sit down next to him, and in a kind manner he spoke thus to him; *Tell me, I pray thee, what thing thou seest fault-worthy, or contrary to the Law in me?* *Simon* not having any thing to answer, besought him to pardon him, which the King did, and was friends with him, and dismissed him, and bestowed gifts on him.

Ah! Young Men, young Men, shall the very Heathen make nothing

thing of reproaches, shall they bear up so prudently and bravely under the greatest loads of Reproaches, and will not you? Will not you, who in your Light, in your Mercies, and in all Gospel engagements, are so highly advanced above them? Oh that none of them might be called to the Bar in the great day, to witness against any of you, into whose hands this Treatise shall fall! And so much by way of answer to the third Objection. But,

Object. 4.

Fourthly, The young man objects and says, *You press us to be good betimes, and to seek and serve the Lord in the Spring and Morning of our days; but we observe that most men mind not these things, but rather give liberty to themselves, to walk in ways that are most pleasing to the flesh; and why then should we be singular and nice? we were better do as the most do,* &c. Now to this I answer:

1. That though bad examples are dan-

dangerous to all, yet usually they prove most dangerous and pernicious to young persons, who are more easily drawn to follow examples than precepts, especially those examples that tend most to undo them: 2 *King.* 15. 9. It is said of *Zachariah* the King of *Israel*, *That he did evil in the sight of the Lord, as his Fathers had done, he departed not from the Sins of Jeroboam*: He would be as his Father was, and do as his Father did, whatever comes on it.

Precepta docent, exempla movent; Precepts may instruct, but examples do persuade.

So the *Samaritans*, of whom it is said, 2 *King.* 17. 41. *These Nations feared the Lord* (that is they made some kind of profession of the true Religion, as the ten tribes had done) *and served their Graven Images* (too) *both their Children, and their Childrens Children* (did thus,) *as did their Fathers, so do they unto this day*: By evil examples they were both drawn to Idolatry, and rooted and confirmed in it; so the main reason why the Kingdom and Church of *Judah* were so settled in their Idolatry, that there was no

no hope of reclaiming them, was this, that their Children remembred their Altars and their Groves by the green Trees, upon the high Hills, Jer. 16. 1, 2. Tinder is not apter to take fire, nor Wax the impression of the Seal, nor Paper the ink, than Youth is to follow ill Examples.

You may see in Rabsh. King of Assyria, who coming to the Font to be baptized, asked what was become of his Ancestors? Answer was made, that they died in a fearful state unbaptized; he replied, that he would rather perish with the multitude, than go to Heaven with a few.

I remember the Heathen brings in a young Man, who hearing of the Adulteries and Wickednesses of the gods, said, *What! do they so, and shall I stick at it? No, I will not.* Sinful Examples are very drawing, and very encouraging, many have found it so to their Eternal undoing; those that have no Ears to hear what you say, have many Eyes

Ethiopians lame themselves if their King be lame, saith *Diodorus*.

Elian reports, that there was a Whore that did boast, that she could easily get Scholars away from *Socrates*, but *Socrates* could get away no Scholars from her.

to see what you do. Bad Princes make bad Subjects, bad Masters make bad Servants; bad Parents make bad Children, and bad Husbands make bad Wives; it is easier for the bad to corrupt the good, than for the good to convert the bad; it is easier to run down the Hill with company, than to run up the Hill alone.

I would desire all young Men, often to remember that saying of *Lactantius*, (*Qui malum imitatur bonus esse non potest,*) He who imitates the bad, cannot be good. Young Men in these professing times, stand between good and bad Examples, as *Hercules* in his Dream stood between Virtue and Vice, sollicited by both; chuse you must who to follow: Oh! that you were all so wise as to follow the best; as a Woman who hath many Suitors is very careful to take the best: So should you; Life, Heaven, Happiness, Eternity hangs upon it.

But before I come to the second Answer let me leave this note, or

Sin is bad in the Eye, worser in the Tongue, worse in the Heart, but worst of all in the Life, and that because it then indangers other mens Souls, as well as a mans own.

no-

notion, with those who make no Conscience of undoing others by their Examples, (viz.)

That a more grievous punishment is reserved for them who cause others to offend, than for them which sin by their Occasion or Example.

Thus the Serpent was punished more than *Eve*, and *Eve* more than *Adam*.

So *Jezabel* felt a greater and sorer Judgment than *Ahab*. To sin (saith one) hath not so much perdition in it, as to cause others to sin. Friends, you have sin enough of your own, to make you for ever miserable, why should you by giving bad examples to others make your selves more miserable? The lowest, the darkest, the hottest place in Hell will be for them that have *drawn others* thither by their Example. *Dives* knew, that if his Brethren were damned, he should be double damned, because he had largely contributed to their bringing them to Hell by his wicked example; and therefore

Mat. 13. 15.

Luk. 16. 28.

desires that they might be kept out of Hell, (not out of any love or good will to them, but) because their coming thither would have made his Hell more hot, his Torments more insufferable? But,

Secondly, I answer, *If you sin with others, you will suffer with others.* If you will partake of other Mens Sins, you shall also partake of other mens Plagues. They that have been (like *Simeon* and *Levi*,) Brethren in Iniquity, they shall be Brethren in Misery; they that have sinned together impenitently, shall be sent to Hell joyntly, they shall perish together *eternally*. If you will needs be companions with others in their Sins, you shall be sure to be companions with them in their Sorrows. The old World sinn'd together, and are drowned together; the *Sodomites* burning in lusts together, were burnt with Fire and Brimstone together; *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, they sin together, they murmur and provoke the Lord together, and the Earth opens her

Rev. 18. 4. *Non minus ardebit qui cum multis ardebit.* Aug. He burns no less that burns with company.

Gen. 6.

Ch. 19.

Numb. 16. 26,—34.

her mouth, and swallows them up together. *Pharaoh* and his Host pursue *Israel* together, and they are drowned in the Sea together. Exod. 14.

Zimri and *Cozbi* committed folly, uncleanness together, and *Phinehas* stabs them both together. Numb. 25.

The *Hebrew* Doctors have a very pretty Parable to this purpose: A man planted an *Orchard*, and going from home, was careful to keep such Watchmen as might both keep it from Strangers, and not deceive him themselves; therefore he appointed one blind but strong of his Limbs, and the other seeing, but a Cripple. These two in their Master's absense conspired together; and the blind took the Lame on his shoulders, and so gather'd the fruit: their Master returning, and finding out their subtilty, punished them both together.

So will Justice deal with you at last, who sin with others; therefore take heed, young men, of doing as others do; But,

Thirdly, I answer, *You*

live by examples, but by precepts; you are not to look so much at what others do, as at what God requires you to do: *Exod.* 23. 2. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shalt thou speak in a Cause to decline after many to wrest Judgment*: Rom. 12. 2. *Fashion not your selves like unto this World*; that is, do not fashion and conform your selves to the corrupt Customs and Courses of wretched Worldlings, who have made Gold their God, and gain their glory; the running cross to a divine command, cost the young Prophet his life (though he did it under pretence of Revelation from God) as you may see in that sad story, 1 *Kin.* 13. *Cap. &c.* (*Non parentum, aut majorum auctoritas, sed Dei docentis imperium*;) The command of God must out-weigh all Authority and example of Men.

Obedientia non discutit Dei mandata, sed facit. Prosp.

Hieron.

And we must be as careful in the keeping of a light Commandment, as an heavy *Commandment*, saith a *Rabbi*; divine commands must be obeyed against all contrary

ry reasonings, wranglings and examples. St. *Augustine* brings in some excusing their compliance with the sinful customs and examples of those times in drinking Healths thus: Great Personages urged it, and it was at the Kings Banquet, where they judged of Loyalty by Luxury, and put us upon this Election, *Drink or die*; the not drinking of a Health had been our death; he gives this answer, That God who sees that for love to him and his Commands thou wouldest not conform to their drunken customs, will give thee favour in their eyes who thus threatned thee to drink.

The complaint is ancient in *Seneca* that commonly men live *non ad rationem, sed ad similitudinem.* Seneca *de vita beata*, c. 1.

Ah! young Men, you that do so much upon Examples now, will find that a stinging, terrifying Question, when put home by God or Conscience, *Who hath required these things at your hands?* Isa. 1. 12. But,

Fourthly, I answer, *Company and Allurements to sin, will be found no sufficient excuse for sin.*

If Eve lay her fault on the Ser-

pent, and *Adam* lay his on *Eve*, God will take it off, and lay the curse on both. *Saul*'s Provocation by his People (and by *Samuel*'s long stay) to offer Sacrifice would not bear him out, but for his disobedience he must lose both his Crown and Life. The Young man in the *Proverbs*, though tempted and solicited by the Harlot, yet he hath a Dart struck thorow his heart; though *Jonah* did plead Gods gracious inclinations to shew mercy, and his fear of being disproved; yea, and though he might have pleaded his fear of cruel and savage usage from the *Ninevites* (whose hearts were desperately set upon wickedness) and his despair of ever doing good upon a people so blinded and hardened; and that they were *Gentiles*, and he a *Jew*; and why should he then be sent with so strange, so terrible a message to such a people, nothing being more hateful and distasteful to a Jewish palate? But all these pleas and excuses will not

1 Sam. 15. 14, 15, 26, 27.

Prov. 7. 14, 15, 21.

Occulos quos peccatum claudit, pœna aperit, Greg. The eyes that sin shuts, affliction opens. and *Jonah* found it so.

bear off the blow; *Jonah* must into the Sea for all this, yea, he must to the bottom of Hell, as himself phraseth it. It is in vain for the bird to complain, that it saw the Corn, but not the Pit-fal, or for a fish to plead it saw the bait, but not the hook. So it will be in vain, for sinners at last when they are taken in an infernal Pit-fall, to plead Company and Allurements by which they have been enticed to undo their souls for ever.

Dyonisius the *Sicilian* King, to excuse himself from the present delivery of the golden Garment he took from his God *Apollo*, answered that such a Robe as that was, could not be at any season of the year useful to his God, for it would not keep him warm in the winter, and it was too heavy for the Summer, and so put off his Idol god; but the God of *spirits*, *the God of all flesh*, will not be put off with any *excuses* or *pretences* when he shall try, and judge the children of men: But,

Fifthly and lastly, I answer, The

it is a very great judgment to be given up to follow evil examples: a man given up to evil example, is a man sadly left of God, wofully blinded by Satan, and desperately hardned in sin; it speaks a man ripe for wrath, for Ruine, for Hell, *Jer.* 6. 11. * *Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people, and the Fathers and the Sons together, shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.* Oh! it is a dreadful thing when God shall make the sinful examples of others to be stumbling blocks to a people, at which they shall stumble and fall, and perish for ever; good had it been for such persons that they had never been born, as Christ once spake concerning *Judas*.

The *Rhodians* & *Lydians* enacted several *Laws*, that those Sons which follow not their Fathers in their Vertues, but followed vicious examples, should be disinherited, and their Lands given to the most vertuous of that race, not admitting any impious Heir whatsoever to inherit; and do you think that God

* This particle *Behold* is sometimes a note of derision, *Gen.* 3. 22. 2. A note of attention often, *Isa.* 28. 6. *Mal.* 1. 1. *Luk.* 1. 20. 3. A note of admiration often. 4. A note of asseveration. 5. A note of castigation in all the sences we may take it here. *Wat.*

will not disinherit all those of Heaven and happiness, who follow vicious Examples? Doubtless he will, 1 Cor. 10. 11, 12.

Object. 5.

The fifth and last Objection (I shall mention) is this, *God is a God of mercy, in him are bowels of mercy, yea a Sea, an Ocean of mercy, he loves mercy, he delights in mercy, and he is ready to shew mercy to poor sinners, when they are even at the last cast, when there is but a short stride between them and the Grave, between them & Eternity, as we see in his extending mercy to the Thief, and in his giving a pardon into his hand, and the assurance of Paradise into his bosom, when he was ready to be turned off the ladder of life, and therefore I may spend the primrose of my days in following sin & the delights, profits, vanities and contents of this World, and at last cast, I may have mercy as well as the Thief, God is a God made up of mercy, and surely he will not deny some crumbs of mercy to poor sinners in misery, &c.*

Now to this Objection, I shall give

give these following Answers.

First, *God is as just as he is merciful*, witness his casting the Angels out of Heaven, and *Adam* out of Paradise; witness all the Threatnings, the Curses, the Woes that the Bible is filled with, from one end to the other; witness the Hell, the Horror, the Terror and Amazement that he raiseth in the Consciences of sinners; witness the devastations that he hath made of the most stately flourishing Towns, Cities, Countries, and Kingdoms, that have been in all the World; witness the variety of diseases, calamities, miseries, dangers, deaths, and Hell, that always attend the inhabitants of the World; but above all, witness Christs treading the Wine-press of his Fathers Wrath, witness his hiding his face from him, and the pouring out of all his displeasure and vengeance on him.

God is as well all Hand to punish, as he is all Grace to pardon.

Zeleucus the *Locrocensian* Law-giver, thrust out one of his own Sons eyes, for his transgressing of a wholsome Law which he had enact-

ed; but God the Father thrust out both Christs eyes for our transgressing of his Royal Law; Oh! the justice and severity of God. But,

Secondly, I answer, That there is not a greater evidence of blindness, prophanenness, hard heartedness, spiritual madness, and Hellish desperateness in all the World, than to make that an Argument, an incouragement to sin (*viz.* the mercy of God) which should be the greatest argument under Heaven to keep a man from sin, as all know that have but read the Scripture: neither are there any sinners in the World, that God delights to rain Hell out of Heaven upon, as upon such, who by their abuse of mercy, turn the God of mercy into a God of clouts, and go on out-daring Justice it self, *Deut.* 29.19,20. *And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace (God is a God of mercy) though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:*

Read *Isa.* 22. 12. to 16. and *Ezek.* 14. 10. 15.

The

The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousie shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this Book shall lye upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under Heaven. In these words you may observe, that God is absolute in threatning to shew that he will be resolute in punishing, *Psal.* 11.5,6. *The wicked and him that loveth iniquity doth his soul hate. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup.*

A lover of iniquity, is a liver in iniquity upon choice.

Ah! That all poor sinners would make these two Scriptures their companions, their constant bedfellows till they are got above that sad temptation of turning the mercy of God into an incouragement to sin.

Whilst *Milo Crotoniates* was rearing asunder the stock of an Oak, his strength failing him, the cleft suddenly closing, he was held so fast by the hands, that he became a prey to the Beasts of the Field:

All the abusers of mercy, will certainly and suddenly become a prey to the Justice of God, that will rend and tear them in pieces, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *Psal.* 50. 22. *Wo, wo to the soul that fights against God with his own mercies*, that will be bad, because he is good; that will sin sin, because he is merciful; that will turn all the kindnesses of God (that should be as so many silver Cords to tie him to Love and Obedience) into Arrows, and so shoot them back into the heart of God. Abused Mercy will at last turn into a Lion, a fierce Lion, and then wo to the abusers and despisers of it. But,

Thirdly, In answer to that part of the Objection, concerning the Thief on the Cross, I offer these things briefly to your thoughts.

Exemplum latronis servati est admiradum non ad imitandum.

1. *That as one was saved to teach sinners not to despair, so another was damned, to teach them not to presume.* A pardon is sometimes given to one upon the Gallows, but who so trusts to that, the Rope may be his hire.

hire. It is not good (saith one) to put it upon the Psalm of *miserere*, and the neck verse; for sometimes he proves no Clerk, and so hangs for it.

2. It is an example without a Promise. Here is an Example of late Repentance; but where is there a Promise of late Repentance?

Oh! let not his late and sudden conversion be to thee a temptation, till thou hast found a Promise for late and sudden conversion; it is not Examples, but Promises that are Foundations for Faith to rest on; he that walks by an Example of Mercy, without a Precept to guide him, and Promise to support him, walks but by a dark lanthorn that will deceive him; well, young man, remember this, Examples of Mercy encrease wrath, when the heart is not bettered by them. But,

3. This was a rare Miracle of mercy, with the glory whereof Christ did honour the ignominy of his Cross; and therefore we may as well look for another Cru

cifying of Christ, as look for a sinners conversion, when he hath scarce time enough to reckon up those particular duties which make up the integrity of its constitution. But,

4. I answer: This Thief knew not Christ before, he had not refused, neglected, or slighted Christ before; the Sermon on the Cross was the first Sermon that ever he heard Christ preach, and Christs prayer on the Cross was the first prayer that ever he heard Christ make; he knew not Christ till he met with him on the Cross (which proved to him a happy meeting;) his case was as if a *Turk* or *Heathen* should now be converted to the Faith; and therefore thou hast little reason, Oh young man, to plead this example to keep Christ and thy Soul asunder, who art every day under the call, the intreaties and wooings of Christ. But,

And lastly, I answer; The circumstances of time and place are rightly to be considered. Now when Christ was triumphing on the Cross

over *Sin*, *Satan*, and the *World*; when he had made the Devils a publick spectacle of scorn and derision, when he was taking his leave of the World, and entring into his Glory; Now he puts a pardon into the Thiefs hand, and crouds other favours and kindnesses upon him.

As in the *Roman* Triumphs, the *Victor* being ascended up to the Capitol in a Chariot of State, used to cast certain pieces of Coin among the people for them to pick up, which he used not to do at other times: So our Lord Jesus Christ, in the day of his Triumph and solemn inauguration into his Heavenly Kingdom, scatters some Heavenly Jewels, that this Thief might pick up, which he doth not, nor will not do every day: or as in these days it is usual with Princes to save some notorious Malefactors at their Coronation, when they enter upon their Kingdoms in Triumph, which they do not use to do afterwards; So did Jesus Christ carry it towards this Thief, but this is not

his

his ordinary way of saving and bringing souls to Glory; and therefore do not, O young man, let not the Thiefs late conversion prove a temptation, or an occasion of thy delaying repentance, and trifling away the Primrose of thy days in vanity and folly. And thus much may suffice to have been spoken by way of answer to the Young mans Objections. I shall now speak a few words to Old men and so close up.

CHAP. IX.

IS it so commendable, so desirable, and so necessary for young men to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the Spring and Morning of their Youth as hath been sufficiently demonstrated in this Treatise? Oh then that I could so woo aged persons, as to win them (who yet have put off this great work) to seek and serve the Lord before their glass be out, their Sun set, and their Soule lost for ever.

Oh that that counsel of the Prophet

phet might take hold upon your hearts. *Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your foot stumble* (through age) *upon the dark Mountains; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.*

I, but aged sinners may reply; *Is there any hope, any help for us?* Is there any probability, is there any possibility that ever such as we are should return, and find mercy and favour with the Lord? we who have lived so long without him, we that have sinned so much against him, we that to this day are strangers to him, yea, in arms against him; is there any hope that we white headed sinners, who have withstood so many thousand offers of Grace, and so many thousand motions of the Spirit, and so many thousand checks of Conscience, and so many thousand tenders of Christ and Heaven, that ever we should obtain Mercy, that ever we should have our old hearts turned, our million

lions of ſins pardoned, our vile natures changed, and our poor ſouls ſaved?

I anſwer, that there is hope even for ſuch as you are; all the Angels in heaven and all the men on earth, cannot tell, but that you, even you, may obtain mercy and favour, that your ſouls die not; with the Lord nothing is impoſſible, and for the grace of the Goſpel nothing is too hard: Now this I make evident by an induction of particulars. Thus,

Mat. 20. 2. The *Roman* Penny was even peece halfpenny.

1. All were not called nor ſent to work in the Vineyard at the firſt hour, ſome were called at the third hour, others at the ſixth, others at the ninth, and ſome at the eleventh; God hath his ſeveral times of calling ſouls to himſelf: the eleventh hour was about five in the afternoon, an hour before Sun-ſet, when it was even time to leave work; and yet at this hour ſome were called, imployed, and rewarded with the reſt.

Some of the Fathers, by the ſeverals hour mentioned in this parable

rable do understand the several Ages of Man, *viz*, Child-hood, Youth, Middle-age, and Old-age, wherein poor souls are called and converted to Christ; the scope of the Parable, is to signifie the free grace of God, in the calling of some in the spring and morning of their days, and in the calling of others in their old age, and in the evening of their days. But,

Gen. 12. 4. Joh. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. ch. 7. 50.

2. *Abraham* in the old Testament, and *Nicodemus* in the New, were called and converted in their old age, when there were but few steps between them and the Grave, between them and Eternity.

I have read of one *Cajus Nearius Victorius*, who was an Old Man three hundred years after the Apostles time, and had been a Pagan all his days, and in his old age he enquired and hearkned after Christ, and said he would be a Christian. *Simplicianus* hearing him say so, would not believe him, but when the Church saw a work of Grace indeed upon him, there was

shouting

shouting and dancing for gladness, and Psalms were sung in every Church, *Cajus Nearius Victorius* is become a Christian; And this was written for a wonder, that he in his old age, and in his gray-hairs, should become a gracious Christian.

Aretius also speaks of a certain man in his time, it is no feigned story, saith he, for I saw the man with my own eyes, he was one that had been a most vile and desperate sinner, a drunkard, a swearer, a wanton, a gamester, and so he continued to his gray hairs; but at last it pleased God to set his sins in order before him, and the man was so troubled in Conscience, that he threw himself down unto the ground, calling upon Satan to take him away, provoking Satan to take him away; *Devil, take thine own, Devil take thine owne; I am thine own, take thine own*; whereupon (saith *Aretius*) prayer was made for him, Christians prayed, they fasted and prayed, they prayed

prayed night and day; and it pleased God at last, that this poor aged sinner revived, converted to God, lived a godly life afterwards, and died comfortably.

Therefore let not the gray-headed sinner despair though his Spring be past, his Summer over past, and he arrived at the Fall of the leaf.

3. Divine Promises shall be made good to returning Souls, to repenting Souls, to believing Souls, be they young or old, 2 Chron. 23. 9. *The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you if you return unto him,* Joel 2. 13. *And rent your hearts and not your garments and turn unto the Lord your God for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.* Isa. 55. 7. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord & he will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon,* or he will multiply to pardon

Isa. 1. 18. Jer. 3. 12. Isa. 43. 22. to 26. ch. 57. 17, 18. Jer. 51. 5. Joh. 3. 16. Mat. 16. 16.

pardon. More of this you may see by reading of the Scriptures in the Margin: all sorts of sin shall be pardoned to all sorts of believing and repenting sinners.

The New *Jerusalem* hath twelve Gates, to shew that there is every way access for all sorts and ranks of sinners, to come to Christ. He was born in an Inn, to shew that he receives all comers, Young and Old, Poor and Rich, *&c.* But,

4. The Lord hath declared by Oath a greater delight in the Conversion and salvation of poor sinners (whether they are young or old) than in the destruction and damnation of such, Ezek. 33. 11. *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die? O ye house of Israel!* Two things make a thing more credible.

1. The quality or dignity of the person speaking.

2. The

2. The manner of the speech: now here you have the great God, not only speaking, promising, but solemnly swearing that he had rather poor sinners should live than die, be happy than miserable; therefore despair not, O aged sinner, but return unto the Lord, and thou shalt be happy for ever. But,

5. There is vertue enough in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, to wash and cleanse away all sin; not only to cleanse away the young mans sins, but also to cleanse away the old mans sins; not only to cleanse a sinner of twenty years old, but to cleanse a sinner of fifty, sixty, yea, a hundred years old, 1 *Joh.* 1. 17. *The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*: not simply from sin, but from all sin; there is such a power and efficacy in the blood of Christ, as is sufficient to cleanse all sorts of sinners from all sorts of sins; there is vertue in the blood of the Lamb to wash out all the spots that are in the oldest sinners hearts; and therefore

Una guttula plus valet quam cœlum & terra. Luther. One little drop is more worth than Heaven and Earth.

fore let not old sinners despair, let not them say, there is no hope, there is no help, as long as this fountain of the Blood of Jesus Christ is open for all sorts of sinners to wash in. But,

6. The call and invitations of Christ in the Gospel are general and indefinite, excluding no sort of sinners, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man* (mark the indefiniteness of personal admittance) *hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me.* Let the sinner be old or young; a green-head, or a gray-head; if he will but open the door, Christ will come in, and have communion and fellowship with him. So in that, *Mat.* 21. 28. Turn to these Scriptures, and dwell upon them, they all clearly evidence the Call and gracious Invitations of Christ to be to all sinners, to every sinner; he excepts not a man; no, though never so old, nothing shall hinder the sinner, any sinner, the worst and most aged sinner

from

from obtaining mercy, if he be willing to open to Christ, and to receive him as his Lord and King, *Joh.* 6. 37. But,

7. Christs Pathetical lamentation over all sorts and ranks of sinners, declares his willingness to shew mercy to them; *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem* (saith Christ, weeping over it, *that thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace,* &c. *O that my People had hearkned unto me!* Christ weeps over *Jerusalem*, so did *Titus*, and so did *Marcellus* over *Syracuse*, and so did *Scipio* over *Carthage*, but they shed tears for them, whose blood they were to shed, but Christ weeps over the necks of those young and old sinners, who were to shed his blood. As a tender-hearted Father weeps over his rebellious children, when neither smiles nor frowns, neither counsels nor intreaties will win them, or turn them from their evil ways, so doth Jesus Christ over those rebellious Jews upon whom nothing would work. But, Luk 19. 41, 42. Psal. 81. 13.

Eighthly

Pſal. 65. 1, 2. Rom. 10. 21 Joh. 5. 2.

Eighthly and laſtly, Though aged ſinners have given Chriſt many thouſand denials, yet he hath not taken them; but after all, and in the face of all denials, he ſtill re-inforces his ſuit, and continues to beſeech them by his Spirit, by his Word, by his Wounds, by his Blood, by his Meſſengers, and by his rebukes, to turn home to him, to embrace him, to believe in him, and to watch with him, that they may be ſaved eternally by him; all which beſpeaks gray-headed ſinners not to deſpair, nor to diſpute, but to repent, return, and believe, that it may go well with them for ever. Conſider ſeriouſly what hath been ſpoken, and the Lord make you wiſe for Eternity.

FINIS.

Imprimatur,

Joſeph Hall, R. P. D. Epiſc. Lond. à Sac. Domeſt. Nov. 25. 1663.

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